

FALLING THROUGH THE MESHWORK: IMAGES OF FALLING
THROUGH 9/11 AND BEYOND

by

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Abstract

This thesis considers images of the falling body after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, starting with Associated Press photographer Richard Drew's photograph of a person falling to their death from the north tower of the World Trade Center. From this specific photograph, this thesis follows various intersecting lines in what I am calling a meshwork of falling-body images. Consequently, each chapter encounters a wide range of examples of falling: from literature to films, personal websites to digital content and immersive technologies to art works. Rather than connecting these instances like nodes, this thesis is more concerned with exploring lines of relation and the way the image moves along these lines.

Drew's image, as a photograph of impending death, is often treated as an object of national trauma, but this thesis asks: what about when Drew's photograph is considered through the institutional framings that both produced and published the image? What about when it is used in personal web spaces and memorials? What about when the image of public death is deemed a lie? What about when it is used for comic effect? What about when immersive technologies place the viewer in tangible contact with the falling-body image? What about when this contact encounters feelings of love and the celebration of life?

By answering these questions, this thesis will argue that the falling-body image offers an alternative perspective of the attacks: as enmeshed in the unfolding lines of life of web users, artists, directors and writers alike. The potential significance of this research is to understand the terrorist attacks of September 2001 as continually unfolding in the meshwork of everyday life. In this way, this thesis outlines the ways we have lived with the image of falling, and the event itself, and how we continue to experience its consequences.

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Introduction: Falling Through the Meshwork

0.1 A Person Falls

This thesis begins with a photograph of a person falling from the north tower of the World Trade Center (WTC) during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 (Figure 0.1). The person is one of many who fell from the WTC before the towers collapsed. The image is also one of many similar photographs of people falling from the towers. The composition of the photograph is striking: the north tower, darker and in sharp focus on the left side of the image, merges almost imperceptibly with the lighter and more softly focused south tower on the right. The falling person is situated directly in the middle of the two towers; falling headfirst, arms straight, right knee bent, the black of trousers and left shoe in relief against the paler tower. Unlike other photographs from that day, there is no sign of any damage to the towers: no fire, no smoke and, crucially, a perceived lack of panic or alarm in the person's body position. The viewer can only see approximately four floors of the 110-storey tower, without any sense of scale (Kirouac-Fram 133). Without these identifying features, the person seems removed from the death and disaster of the day: anonymous, still and dwarfed by the clinical intactness of the towers in the background. This image is the seventh frame in an eleven-frame sequence tracking the person as they fall taken by Associated Press (AP) photographer Richard Drew. In the full sequence, the person flails and turns, revealing an orange t-shirt underneath the white jacket. In some of these surrounding frames, the towers are also photographed slanted, emphasising the chaotic motion of the fall ("AP Images: Richard Drew"). The photograph was published in the *New York Times* on 12 September (Figure 0.2), as well as in many other national and international newspapers, but then largely disappeared from print media. Following a September 2003 *Esquire* article by Tom Junod, this photograph became known as "The Falling Man".

Here, I make my first intervention into the story of this photograph. From the person's height, build and, albeit blurry, facial features, the figure seems to be a man, but it is impossible to know for certain. It is worth noting that in the AP online image archive, Drew's photograph appears with the simple caption: "[i]n file picture, *a person* falls headfirst from the north tower of New York's World Trade Center" ("AP Images: Richard Drew", emphasis added). Similarly, Drew's photograph was published in the *New York Times* with the following caption: "*A person* falls headfirst after jumping from the north tower of the World Trade Center. It was a horrific sight that was repeated in the moments after the planes struck the towers" ("A Creeping Horror", emphasis added). In the months and years after this initial print context, however, the person's identity has been fixed as "The Falling Man". This thesis tries to keep the possibilities for the photograph as open as possible. Therefore, I choose to refer to the image as Drew's falling-body photograph, and other images of falling people as falling-body images, after Christopher Vanderwees in his paper "Photographs of Falling Bodies and the Ethics of Vulnerability in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*". This way of referencing these images allows me to keep my discussion as open and flexible as possible, too, and also to underline the enmeshment of images from different contexts.

Accelerated by Junod's article, the story of Drew's photograph has often been singled out as demonstrative of the way mainstream American media initially removed the images of falling people from the visual record of that day, perpetuating instead familiar narratives of heroism and victory.¹ In some cases, the photographs of falling people have become representative of the "unrepresentable", of the cataclysmic shift following the destruction of the towers. From this perspective, these images seemed to fall out of sight themselves,

¹ See Melnick 78-93, Versluys 19-48, Auchter 127-69, Vanderwees "Tightrope" 228-47.

disappearing into the large “rupture of normality” that the event seemed to produce (Jarvis, “Times” 246). Lee Jarvis outlines the initial positioning of the terrorist attacks by the Bush administration as unpredictable, unspeakable and incomprehensible (“Times” 246). Similarly, the falling-body images have been described as “unimaginable” (Carroll, “Limits” 111), “unspeakable” (Good 4) and “taboo” (Mauro 588). As Claire Kahane writes, these falling-body images were “beyond the limits of what we can bear to see” (111). The falling bodies could not be assimilated into the aftermath narrative, and were seemingly beyond representation (Vanderwees, “Tightrope” 234). Jarvis also outlines the administration’s contrasting claims of temporal continuity with regards to the attacks, presenting an opposing conception of time “as a discernibly linear process” and “unidirectional” (“Times” 251). These conflicting statements located 9/11 within a longer history of intensifying conflict and violence (Jarvis, “Times” 252). Critical responses also seemed to become concerned with “narratives of continuity” in representations of the attacks (Keniston and Quinn 5).² Of the images of falling bodies, Laura Frost juxtaposes the “still, discontinuous time” of the photograph with “narrative time”, which she describes as the “time beyond the frame of the still image” where the falling figure actually falls to death (193-96). Only when still representations of the falling bodies confront the narrative time of falling, she argues, can “the larger symbolic and political meanings of these bodies” become clear (196).

There is, however, an alternative topology to the sudden severance of rupture and the fixed linearity of continuity with which to consider falling-body images: as an entanglement. Viewing the image of the falling body as neither unrepresentable nor only truly representable when considered as part of a linear progression can also suggest that the event itself is a complex, problematic, multi-directional and ever-expanding tangle. In direct contrast to

² See Keniston and Quinn, 1-18, Frost 180-207, Holloway 129-53, Keeble 3-17 and 69-91.

Frost's conclusion that still photographs of "arrested, suspended bodies" reflect "a tendency to think of 9/11 as a moment frozen in time ... rather than as part of a political process that is still unfolding", I argue that the falling-body image is a way in to considering the event as an interconnecting, unfolding *mesh* (211). As Kristiaan Versluys writes, despite the overwhelming feeling that the event is unsayable, "[w]illy-nilly, the event gets absorbed into a mesh of meaning making" (3). Versluys asserts that a narrative is needed to "restore the broken link" in the network of significations which he works out through discussion of a predominantly literary archive of the event (4). I propose, however, that the concept of "mesh" better suits an understanding of the event as messy, open-ended and continually becoming, and I can only address the expanse of the event by focusing on multiple media and texts. Jill Bennett offers a comparable interpretation of the event through her work on practical aesthetics, the study of art and images as a way to apprehend the world (3). This approach enables Bennett to see contemporary artworks as "'in' rather than 'about' an event" and understand events as always in the process of radiating outwards (36). These "dynamics of interconnection" are "at odds with the notion of the event anchored in fixed historical time", and so the event "cannot be conceived in terms of a sequential unfolding, sandwiched between a past and a future" (36-8). I suggest that the 9/11 falling-body photographs, their every reoccurrence and all the other images with which these photographs are entangled (some detailed in this thesis, many more that are not) demonstrate that the event can never be finished. In other words, a person falls from the WTC on 11 September 2001, and falls through an expanding mesh of frames with no end in sight. I hope to both offer a fresh perspective on an over-determined image and on the way we consider the significance of the attacks in the second decade of the twenty-first century.

This thesis follows the journey of Drew's photograph from the photographer's narration of events and the photograph's publication in the *Times* to the, sometimes oblique,

references to the image in documentaries, feature films, literature, articles, first-person perspective video footage and online spaces. As such, I attend to the specificities of a single photograph and to more generalised representations of falling. This slippage between the specific and the general underlines the two research foci of this thesis: explicit framings of the falling-body image, for example in the *Times*, and also the entanglement of these frames within an extended mesh of falling bodies. Therefore, whilst this thesis begins with the story of one photograph, I am also keen to stress the multiple entry points into the figure of the falling body. I will address and attempt to unravel these entry points to position the destruction of the WTC, through an exposition of images of falling, not as a moment of rupture or continuity but of enmeshment. This distinction is critical for my thesis as ideas of rupture and continuity indicate, in the first case, that it is possible to sever the event from related moments and, in the second case, that the event is merely linked to other points like nodes in a network, thus presupposing a separation between the attacks and other moments of falling. Positioning the destruction of the WTC as a moment of entanglement encourages a focus on the multiple paths along which the event through the falling-body image becomes enmeshed, rather than a linear trajectory from the attacks to the current moment. This approach centres on the way we have lived with the image in the years since 2001.

0.2 “[S]ome jumped or fell from the building”: The 9/11 “Jumpers”

Although Drew’s photograph was isolated as “*The Falling Man*”, there were many other falling bodies on that day. After reviewing photographs and video footage, a team from the *Times* estimated that fifty people fell to their deaths from the towers (Flynn and Dwyer). A second team from *USA Today* calculated the number to be closer to 200 after not only searching through photographs and videos, but also interviewing eyewitnesses and analysing the times and locations of people falling. Off the record, the fire department and Medical Examiner’s Office agreed with this larger estimate (Cauchon and Moore). According to the

published report of their findings for *USA Today*, Dennis Cauchon and Martha Moore asserted that more people jumped from the north tower because conditions were significantly worse. They report that the collision point was higher and smaller (floors 94 to 98) and so the fire was concentrated on fifteen floors rather than spread over thirty floors in the south tower. Also, the north tower was burning for forty-six minutes longer than the south tower, and occupants of the south tower had just over fifteen minutes to evacuate between the two collisions.³ Of the larger number that fell from the north tower, Cauchon and Moore report that they came from the windows of the Marsh & McLennan insurance company on the 100th floor, from the offices of Cantor Fitzgerald on floors 101 and 105 and from the Windows on the World restaurant on floors 106 and 107 (Cauchon and Moore). The restaurant itself was host to a conference sponsored by the Risk Waters Group which had started at 8:30 a.m., sixteen minutes before the collision (Wayne). Going by the *USA Today* estimate, then, between seven and eight percent of the people who died during the attacks fell to their deaths (Junod).

The 9/11 Commission Report, originally published in 2004, does not offer an estimate of how many people died in this way but does mention individuals falling from the north tower: “Faced with insufferable heat, smoke, and fire, and with no prospect of relief, some *jumped or fell* from the building” (287, emphasis added). Later, in detailing the initial response by the emergency services to the first collision, the report asserts that the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) was aware that “conditions were so dire” that “some civilians on upper floors were *jumping or falling* from the building” (290, emphasis added). All further references, however, outline only the risk posed by falling bodies, labelled thereon as “jumpers” and grouped with falling debris, for emergency services units attempting to enter and leave the towers (300, 309, 310 and 316). The Commission Report is mostly clear to

³ For a full timeline of events surrounding the WTC on 11 September 2001, see Glanz and Lipton 226-72.

establish that they jumped *or* fell, maintaining an ambiguity over the intentionality of these deaths when directly addressing the fact that people died in this way (Flynn and Dwyer). The label “jumpers”, however, stands in direct contrast with a 2002 statement from Ellen Borakove, spokeswoman for the New York City Medical Examiner’s Office, in which she asserts that the office does not classify those who fell as “jumpers”. “A ‘jumper’ is somebody who goes to the office in the morning knowing that they will commit suicide”, she stresses, “[t]hese people were forced out by the smoke and flames, or blown out” (qtd. in Cauchon and Moore). “They didn’t jump”, the Examiner’s Office told Junod, “nobody jumped” (qtd. in “The Falling Man”).⁴

Questions and concerns about how to refer to and show these bodies punctuate both public and critical responses to falling-body photographs. Notably, as detailed in Henry Singer’s Channel 4 documentary *9/11: The Falling Man* (2006), a large version of Drew’s photograph was published in the *Morning Call*, a newspaper serving Allentown, Pennsylvania, on 12 September (Figure 0.3). The image was featured on the back page of the first section, and appeared in a larger frame than any other newspaper in America that ran the photograph (Singer). Deborah Holets, a resident of Allentown, wrote in a “Letter to the Editor” in the 14 September issue: “Do not let your children read *The Morning Call*! The half-page, color picture of a man falling out of the window was used in such poor judgment!” (Holets). Similarly, fellow resident Bob Messinger read his own letter to the editor in

⁴ “Jumping” and “jumper” are words that do not just signify premeditated suicide, however, but have also been used to describe those leaping from burning buildings. Following the outbreak of a fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in Manhattan in 1911, for example, the *Times* reported in exacting detail how workers “jumped ... crashed through broken glass [and] crushed themselves to death on the sidewalk” (“141 men and girls die”). Furthermore, in her profile of a survivor of the factory fire published in December 2001, Elizabeth McCracken writes: “Surely some of the early jumpers believed they were saving themselves”, complicating the line drawn by Borakove and the Medical Examiner’s Office between the word “jumper” and the desire for self-destruction. Finally, in *Strategy of Firefighting*, retired Deputy Chief of the FDNY Vincent Dunn explains that “[i]n fire department jargon, ‘jumpers’ refers to people who have jumped from windows to avoid the flame heat inside a burning building” (340). In other words, far from denoting suicide, referring to those falling from the towers as “jumpers” or “jumping” is entirely appropriate for the situation.

Singer's documentary: "It was with utter disgust that, as I read the September 12th edition, I turned a page only to see a large photo of some poor soul plummeting 1000 feet headfirst to certain death" (qtd. in Singer). The *Morning Call* did not publish the photograph again (Singer). Cauchon and Moore reported that newspapers ran "only one or two photos, then published no more", whilst Flynn and Dwyer asserted that these victims "have largely vanished from consideration". Drew himself even refers to the photograph as "the most famous picture nobody's ever seen" (qtd. in Rich). Junod, too, concludes that "[t]he picture went all around the world, and then disappeared, as if we willed it away" ("The Falling Man"). In 2011, writing for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Mark Konkol asked "[t]en years after 9/11, can you look at 'The Falling Man' photograph?" A decade after its initial publication, Drew's photograph was still considered to be an image at which it was too uncomfortable, too painful, to look. The language surrounding the photograph not only framed it from the start, and continues to frame it, as a contentious image but also frames the act of viewing the photograph as a difficult and potentially exploitative task.

People *did* look, however, and even acknowledged falling-body photographs as a significant part of the photographic record of the attacks. In 2002, Drew's photograph was awarded third prize in the Spot News category of the World Press Photo Awards ("Richard Drew") with an honourable mention for freelance photographer David Surowiecki's "Victims Jump" ("POYI: Victims Jump") (Figure 0.4). "Victims Jump" features a group of people jumping from the same window of the north tower. Surowiecki's photograph was also one of two falling-body photographs acknowledged by the judging panel at the Pictures of the Year International awards, the other being José Jimenéz's "Leap to Death" ("POYI: Leap to Death") (Figure 0.5). In a similar fashion to Drew's photograph, "Leap to Death" captures a person falling from the north tower in striking detail. Unlike Drew's photograph, however, in "Leap to Death", the person has leapt sideways away from the carnage of the impact zone.

The person's arms are semi-obscured by the smoke. Notable in both Surowiecki's and Jiménez's photographs is the use of "jump" and "leap", as opposed to "fall", signifying in the title a certain amount of agency on behalf of the individual. Furthermore, freelance photographer and filmmaker Lyle Owerko captured people falling from the north tower in such a way as to remove any traces of the impact zone, their bodies duplicated by their shadows on the reflective surface of the towers (Figures 0.6 and 0.7). An illustration based on one of Owerko's photograph is also featured in Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Figure 0.8) (*Extremely Loud* "Title Page"). Photographers who captured falling bodies were acknowledged by both international and national agencies, as well as in fictional representations of the attacks, even if newspapers like the *Morning Call* received criticism for publishing their work.

As well as newspaper coverage framing the falling-body photographs as necessarily problematic, the narratives surrounding Drew's photograph quickly set it apart from the others and attempted to fix its meaning as "*The Falling Man*". Junod's article distinguishes Drew's image as "the Unknown Soldier" from this collection of comparable images, rendering the photograph a representative for all the visible and unseen victims from that day. Three years later, Singer's documentary tracked the publication history of the photograph, as well as the search for the identity of its subject, interviewing Drew, Junod and the families of those who died and may have jumped. Despite the specificity of their titles, however, both the article and the documentary slip between discussing the particularities of Drew's photograph and also the wider mesh of images. For instance, the documentary interviews Richard Pecorella who turned to the Internet to search for any trace of his fiancée Karen Juday, an administrative assistant for Cantor Fitzgerald. He found a picture by AP photographer Amy Sancetta and thought he recognised a woman wearing similar clothes to Karen leaning out of the upper windows of the north tower. He became convinced that she had jumped (Singer).

Shortly after appearing in Singer's documentary, Pecorella went to Drew's office to look through his collection of photographs to see if they could draw any closer to knowing how Karen died, but found no further information ("Man still on quest"). "The Falling Man" intersects with "a falling woman", the documentary reaching out beyond the specific photograph to the wider visual archive of falling.

In fact, this project of differentiation and entanglement began with an earlier article. Eleven days after the attacks, Toronto newspaper the *Globe and Mail* published a story by Peter Cheney entitled "The life and death of Norberto Hernandez". In his article Cheney tells the story of Hernandez, a pastry chef at the Windows on the World restaurant, who died during the attacks. After seeing a photograph of Norberto on a missing person's poster, Cheney believed that the person in Drew's photograph might be Norberto. Even this close to the event, Cheney describes Drew's photograph as "now-famous". Cheney opens his story with the image of the family making Norberto's funeral arrangements and "[o]n the table in front of them was a newspaper photograph of one of the most horrifying images from a day full of horrors: Richard Drew's photograph". This story, recounted again in Singer's film, appears alongside an image of the photograph in N. R. Kleinfield's *Times* article on 12 September, suggesting that it was the *Times* on the table in the Hernandez household (Figure 0.9). Although, less than two weeks after the attacks, Cheney isolates the photograph as already famous, the mesh of framing narratives is also apparent. Drew's photograph appears on the table in the Hernandez household as a result of the interconnecting trails paced by Drew and Kleinfield on assignments for the AP and the *Times*. Just like the framings of the photograph by the media as something that disappeared or that should not be seen, the framings of these two prominent institutions interlinked, causing the photograph to appear in the Hernandez household and thousands of others. In other words, rather than indicating a moment of rupture or linear continuity, Drew's photograph is a result of an entanglement of

intersecting trajectories and interventions. If it can be considered “famous”, it is because of these interconnecting frames. The enmeshment of frames through which Drew’s photograph moves forms the basis of this thesis and I will provide more detailed explorations of both concepts, the mesh and the frame, here and in the first chapter, respectively.

0.3 “Looking is often the quickest way to fall”: Critical Understandings of Falling

In another demonstration of this widening mesh of narrative frames, a year after Junod’s article was published in *Esquire*, a men’s magazine, it was republished in its entirety in a 2004 issue of *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist scholarship*, an interdisciplinary journal of performance studies from a feminist perspective. This issue was dedicated to an exploration of contemporary understandings of falling. In their introduction, Michelle Dent and MJ Thompson describe how the idea for the issue originated in 2000 with a proposal entitled “Falling” for a graduate conference (7). Their aim “was to examine key moments in dance where falling – intentional and otherwise – revealed itself to be an institution of the 20th century that had outlived its radicality” (8). Subsequent events, however, proved their thesis wrong. Dent and Thompson list the destruction of the WTC and the Colombia Space Shuttle explosion in February 2003, as well as the permanent grounding of the Concorde in November of the same year, as evidence that falling “was very much a technique of the moment” and had become, in fact, the “gesture *par excellence*” (8, 11). Dent and Thompson determine that their project in the issue is to “look squarely” at falling even if the attendant situations are traumatic (10). “[T]he fall as *meaningful* act”, they write, “has ... been collectively reinvigorated in the attempt to explain this new world order” (11). It is significant that they position the attacks within a selection of falls in their introduction, also including the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 in November 2001 and the spate of undergraduate falling suicides at New York University in 2003 and 2004, and include only Junod’s article as a direct response to the attacks. This approach situates the falling bodies of

September 2001 within a larger emerging visual archive of falling. The subsequent essays explore performance pieces that encounter the falling body from the swoon in *Romeo and Juliet* to the falling death of performance artist Yoshiyuki Takada and the crawling performance of William Pope.L past Ground Zero.⁵ These essays touch upon an intersecting mass of bodies made more prominent, and more connected, in the first few years (and from the first few falls) of the twenty-first century.

Representative of this mass is a piece in the issue by Peggy Phelan entitled “On Moving to a Hill”, a meditation on falling comprised of interlinked and seemingly incongruent sections joined by the rhythms of falling and rising. The writing moves seamlessly from Vincent Van Gogh to the light of San Francisco to the character of Kaspar in Peter Handke’s 1968 novel of the same name, unfolding and expanding ever further yet always pulled back by the fall. Phelan considers writing the essay to be a sort of “re-injury” in that it reminds her she has a history in the form of “longer tumbles” with these same subjects (22). Phelan, having moved to San Francisco from New York, begins and concludes the essay by describing the challenges of walking up a steep hill to her new house. She writes: “Each time I fall down, fall up, the hill upon which my home is perched, I am reminded once more how difficult it is to secure oneself to firm ground. The view is fabulous, and I do love to take it in, even while it pitches me, time and time again, off my feet. *Looking is often the quickest way to fall*” (17, emphasis added). Phelan’s essay demonstrates, too, that looking at falling is the surest way to fall through other instances of falling.⁶ As Phelan segues from falling over to falling to death to falling into language and her own writing, we follow as these falls intersect one another and pull us towards further instances. Although

⁵ See Fisher 137-52, Dent “Fallen body” 173-200, Thompson 63-90.

⁶ T. Nikki Cesare Schotzko makes a similar point by relating this quote by Phelan to Drew’s photograph: “And just as we might fall into love by looking, or out of it by finding something else we have been looking for, we might fall into this photograph, like love, like its loss” (56).

these essays speak to a wide variety of performances and examples, the issue itself presents the falling body as creating possibilities, challenging limits and opening space. Both Phelan's essay and the broader scope of the *Women & Performance* issue attest to the way that the falling body has many forms, contexts, purposes and ramifications. And, crucially, the falling bodies of September 2001 are just one of them.

In a 2011 special issue of the *Journal of American Studies* to acknowledge the ten-year anniversary of the attacks, Rob Kroes, Miles Orvell and Alan Nadel offered their responses to the question of whether Drew's photograph had attained iconic status.⁷ Kroes argues that when an image, like Drew's, becomes iconic it also becomes a "flashbulb memory", performing the work of memory for us (1-2). These photographs "speak no words, use no rhetorical flourish, no linguistic embellishments or evasions"; they are, he continues, "literally before language" (2). Nadel's response begins rather tellingly that "the more Kroes tries to talk about the photograph, the more he talks about other things" (16). Indeed, even in his description of Drew's photograph, Kroes writes that the person "seemed to assume the stylized pose of an Olympic diver" (2-3). Kroes also makes reference to Roy Shifrin's *Icarus* statue (1982), Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) and Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007). Nadel's comment does not appear to be a criticism of Kroes's contribution. In fact, Nadel concludes his own essay with the observation that the person in the photograph "looks strapped into some invisible seat on an amusement park ride", and he also agrees with Kroes that the photograph resembles a flag (20, 17). Rather, Nadel's observation attests to the multiple entry points into the falling-body image that potentially undermine Kroes' proposition that Drew's photograph can ever be considered prior to its contextual framings. Similarly, Orvell asserts that the photograph is never

⁷ This roundtable does not reference the *Women & Performance* issue as a critical intervention into the representation of falling after 9/11.

“independent of mediation” but is instead “mediated both by the formal character of the image and by the verbal context in which the image is presented” (14). Orvell suggests that the photograph’s compositional features incited Drew to select this particular frame, and the verbal context “frames the image” and “furnishes the historical matrix of its meaning, often accompanying the image into the world”, with these meanings accumulating over time (15). The matrix, an enclosing structure and also an interconnecting system, appeals to the specificity of each instance of the image, and also its capacity for movement and interrelation.

Although he does not discuss falling-body images, in his investigation of images after 9/11, W. J. T. Mitchell presents a comparable thesis to Orvell’s “matrix”. He writes: “Later versions of an image ‘remember’ earlier versions, recuperating and transforming them at the same time [however] [i]t is not only that symbolic meanings accumulate as an image moves forward in history ... but that its new meanings have the effect of reframing the past” (*Cloning* 145-47). Mitchell plots a line from the figure of Moses raising his arms to images of the Passion of Christ to the photograph of a hooded man being tortured at Abu Ghraib prison, and the use of this image in a parody of an iPod advertisement, to suggest that the Abu Ghraib “Bagman”, the key focus of his book, “operates like a Rorschach inkblot, inviting projection and multiplicity of association” (149). In a similar fashion to Drew’s falling-body photograph, Mitchell’s “Bagman” seems to “move” beyond its original photographic context, out into a chaotic and unpredictable mesh of images. Mitchell’s project, like his wider oeuvre, is centred on a proposal for a “language of affect and desire” of images rather than the “language of power (or weakness)” (121). In an earlier work, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, Mitchell outlines this approach as a shift “from what pictures *do* to what they *want*, from power to desire, from the model of the dominant power to be opposed, to the model of the subaltern to be interrogated or (better) to be invited to speak”

(33). Further, he explains that this model is less about the meaning of images than to analyse process, framing and the “*relationality* of image and beholder” (*Lives and Loves* 49).

Mitchell’s work proposes that an image has a life, or a certain vitality, of its own beyond the control of any particular producer or consumer, and beyond any attributions to a specific person or moment, although these elements of the image remain important (*Cloning* 111).

Like Orvell’s matrix (literally “womb”), Mitchell’s work encourages a view of images that attends to their movement and liveliness.

In recent years, studies of the representation of falling in literature and visual culture have gained momentum.⁸ Some critical material foregrounds the falling-body image as evidence of a struggle for meaning after the destruction of the towers. This material is often supported by an awareness of the way falling-body photographs were initially removed from the mainstream historical record of the attacks.⁹ For instance, Hamilton Carroll concludes that DeLillo’s *Falling Man* is as much an example of the limits of representation in narrative form as it is a representation of limits themselves, and literature’s “failure to represent” (127).

Similarly, Aaron Mauro explores how *Falling Man* and *Extremely Loud* perform “the failure of imagination”, or “a failure to imagine the unthinkable” (591). Elizabeth S. Anker outlines the tendency in several 9/11 novels of allegorising the falling body in order to provide explanatory frameworks for the event that problematically smooth away its complexity by resorting to narratives of the spectacle, nostalgia or implicitly apologising for “self-sabotaging protagonists” who are usually white, middle-aged men (478). Anker’s survey of

⁸ For a discussion of falling in literature after the attacks, see Huehls 42-59, Morley 245-58, Apitzsch 93-108, Boxall 173-84, Leps 184-203, Anker 463-82, Kauffman 135-51, Mauro 584-606, Carroll “Limits” 107-30, Herren 159-76, Pozorski 81-100 and 123-44, Vanderwees “Photographs” 174-94. For a discussion of visual representations of falling, see Fitzpatrick 84-102, Faulkner 67-85, Frost 180-206, Thurschwell 201-34, Hamdy 247-62, Melnick 78-93, Mueller 45-64, Muntéan “Men” 171-94, Kirouac-Fram 130-7, C. Johnston 30-5, Lurie 176-89, Vanderwees “Tightrope” 228-47, Schotzko 1-26 and 27-63

⁹ See Carroll, “Limits” 108, Mauro 584, Anker 472, Frost 182-3.

these novels, she concedes, is touched by a dissatisfaction at the state of the genre, and their failure to account for non-normative experience (478).

Frost suggests that post-9/11 literature “offers a critique of the common idea that visual culture is the medium best suited to representing 9/11” (183). She writes, for instance, that *Extremely Loud* exposes the failings of visual representations of the attacks by questioning the ability of the photograph to “resolve the trauma of the falling people” (185). Frost continues more forcefully that literary treatments of the falling people demonstrate the failure of the photograph to allow witnesses to process and work through their meaning (190). The falling-body photographs are, according to Frost “monuments to epistemological failure” (191). In *Extremely Loud*, when Oskar creates a flipbook of a person falling “up” rather than to their death, Frost sees this as a reiterative rather than progressive narrative (194). In a similar fashion to Anker’s dissatisfaction of novels, like *Extremely Loud*, which employ in her view facile explanations in order to displace anxiety over the attacks (464), Frost sees visual representations of falling as displacing a true understanding of the “whole story” onto “sanctified images” (200-01). Whether failing themselves, or portraying that failure, the representations of falling after 9/11 are understood by these critics to expose the disjunction between the event and its documentation in art, digital media and literature.

In one of the first sustained explorations of what it means to refer to falling after the attacks, *Falling After 9/11: Crisis in American Art and Literature* (2014), Aimee Pozorski asserts that the perceived problem of “how to refer to falling” stems not from the limitations of language or its failure but rather from its “excessive potential for references” which contributes to further uncertainty surrounding the event (25). Language is slippery and malleable, Pozorski suggests, always referring but “not necessarily to our intended target” (28). The falling body is the ideal figure for illustrating the difficulty of reference when language offers an “explosion of possibilities” (37). Pozorski directly answers Mauro’s

assertion of the limitations of imagination in the work of DeLillo and Foer, stating instead that there is an excess of imagination surrounding the falling body (39). Consequently, Pozorski's work reinforces a common feature of critical explorations of falling made apparent in the issue of *Women & Performance*: an expansive mass of interconnected falling bodies. In Pozorski's work, one such thread in this mass is how novels that contend with the aftermath of the Vietnam War show a "similar entanglement" of literal, figurative and moral falling to 9/11 literature (51). The fact that Pozorski begins with a chapter on Vietnam before she turns to Drew's photograph, *Falling Man* and *Extremely Loud* is also demonstrative of the "slipperiness" of falling itself. Her subsequent close readings of falling figures in the work of DeLillo, Foer, Diane Seuss and Christopher Kennedy demonstrate the potential of language to navigate through the world "when it all seems to be falling down around us" (98).

A year after the publication of *Falling After 9/11* came another book-length critical study of falling: *Learning How to Fall: Art and Culture After September 11* (2015) by T. Nikki Cesare Schotzko. Where Pozorski focuses on fictions of falling, *Learning How to Fall* draws on performance studies, media studies and cultural studies in order to examine the increasing difficulty in distinguishing between the event and representation, or further "when the event itself becomes its documentation, rather than the acts that may or may not have actually happened" (10). Drew's photograph is the lens through which Schotzko establishes and concludes her argument, but the scope of her book moves well beyond 9/11 and even the falling body itself. *Learning How to Fall* creates a mesh from a *Sex and the City* episode that evokes Marina Abramović, the controversial senior art project by Yale student Aliza Shvarts (which is juxtaposed sensitively with the circulation of online material pertaining to the rape of an unnamed girl from West Virginia) and the representation of real news stories on Aaron Sorkin's television series *The Newsroom*, to investigate how the truth of an event is "contingent ... upon available documentation of the event" (122). Phrases "falling-through"

and “feeling with” articulate for Schotzko an affective fabric of references through which bodies have the potential to connect and create meaning (57-8, 117). In the penultimate chapter, Schotzko outlines a chronometry of falling that expands sensory experience beyond specific temporal or spatial parameters (163-77). Pinning her final remarks on the initial definition of chronometry coined by J. F. W. Herschel (who used the movement of the stars to ascertain the time), she concludes: “Time is predicated on movement, and movement remains perpetually and beautifully inexact. It corresponds to other movements, and therefore to other times and to other bodies; it allows us to read these movements, these fallings and *falling-throughs* through all the others” (177). The falling body *falling through* the entanglement of other bodies encourages a moving with, rather than stilling of, the image, and to see the event through other falling bodies. We see “that Falling Man through other falls and stumbles and getting-back-ups” (Schotzko 174-5).

This thesis follows from the work of Pozorski and Schotzko, and the way that both *Falling After 9/11* and *Learning How to Fall* explore and theorise, with their own particular approaches, the expansive and unfolding archive of falling bodies, and what this archive might mean for the relationship between event and representation. My research offers an original contribution to the study of falling-body images, however, by taking the opportunity to slow down the impetus to move beyond Drew’s photograph to other instances of falling in order to ask, where is the image? Thinking back to Drew’s photograph in the *Times* at the home of Norberto Hernandez’s family: what are the framing narratives at work so that the image arrives in the newspaper? And then, what really happened to the falling-body photographs between this initial moment of publication and their re-emergence in mainstream media two years later in *Esquire* magazine? Further, how do films, texts and art projects that directly and indirectly reference the falling-body image frame the falling body after 9/11? What strategies do they use to offer a perspective of what it feels like to fall? How do they

navigate seemingly competing narratives of tragedy and joy? Whilst Pozorski and Schotzko attend to the slipperiness of referring to falling, I want to combine this messy tangle of connections with solid case studies which comprise specific framings of the image so as not to move beyond Drew's photograph but to move *with* it.

Whilst Orvell's sense of the matrix framing structure gestures towards both the specificity of the frame and its capacity for interrelation, I want to offer an interpretation of framing that explores this dual meaning in more extensive detail. To this end, I make a second related intervention by plotting a more expansive and theorised sense of the mesh. I suggest that with each new framing, the image moves along a mesh of entangled lines, and creates new lines in the process. Pozorski and Schotzko do not engage with these questions of framing, providing limited critical analysis of the photograph's framing narratives and little attention to the different viewing experiences of seeing the falling body, for example, in a newspaper as opposed to seeing it in an advertisement or a novel. This thesis approaches falling-body images from a visual culture studies perspective, pursuing meaning and significance from analyses of the continual production and consumption of the image. Such an approach will allow me to be both specific to each case study, and attend to its particular framing conventions, and also to be experimental by bringing a range of falling-body images from diverging contexts to bear on Drew's photograph. By exploring this mesh of frames, I can demonstrate the potential for all kinds of falling-body images to become entangled with Drew's photograph, thus propelling the event along further lines of response and interpretation.

0.4 “The scrap of an image”: Visual Culture and the Meshwork

0.4.1 *Visual Culture*

In “Studying Visual Culture”, Irit Rogoff writes:

In the arena of visual culture the scrap of an image connects with a sequence of a film and with the corner of a billboard or the window display of a shop we have passed by, to produce a new narrative formed out of both our experienced journey and our unconscious. Images do not stay within discrete disciplinary fields such as “documentary film” or “Renaissance painting” ... Instead they provide the opportunity for a mode of new cultural writing existing at the intersections of both objectivities and subjectivities. (26).

A cultural studies approach to the visual attends to images as inextricable from the social and cultural processes shaping their production and consumption, and also to the intersections of these processes as images are reproduced, accumulating further meanings and responses.

Although fields like “documentary film” and “Renaissance painting” cannot be collapsed, and it is essential to recognise and avoid flattening their differences, images can and do move through these parameters. As Mitchell asserts in his critique of visual culture, opening up the arena of images to “consider both artistic and non-artistic images does not automatically abolish the differences between these domains” (“Showing Seeing” 93). Quite the opposite in fact: as Mitchell continues, the boundaries between fields “only become clear when one looks at both sides of this ever-shifting border and traces the transactions and translations between them” (93). This approach is particularly apt in relation to the falling-body images I juxtapose in this thesis, which range broadly across a spectrum of cultural outputs. Following the movement of images and exploring the solidity of their various cultural, social, institutional and media frames are not, then, contradictory pursuits of research. A visual culture analysis opens up possibilities of weaving and re-weaving narratives, and of the “continuous (re)production of meanings”, whilst also acknowledging that images do appear in definable frames (Rogoff 27).

In a 2011 interview with the *Journal of Visual Culture*, Martin Jay emphasises the “growing willingness to take seriously as objects of scholarly inquiry all manifestations of our visual environment and experience, not only those that were deliberately created for aesthetic effects” concurrent with the development of a cultural approach to the visual (88). He continues that with recent technological advancements encouraging the production and circulation of images “at a hitherto unimagined level”, it has become necessary to “focus on how they work and what they do” rather than “mov[ing] past them too quickly to the ideas they represent or the reality they purport to depict” (88). In their outline of a “visual cultural studies” Martin Lister and Liz Wells also emphasise that a cultural studies approach to the visual resists “reifying or hypostatizing” the image in order to examine “the ‘how’ as well as the ‘what’ of culture ... productions as well as context” and the various “moments” that an image passes through (64). They continue that “each moment contributes to the meanings – plural not singular – which [an image] has and may have”, and so the image is “socially produced, distributed and consumed”, transformed and contested (64). Whilst the meanings of an image play a role in this kind of study, it is always with the view that meaning is processual and entangled with various framing narratives. Rather than taking for granted which version of an image a viewer might see, this approach asks: where is the image? How did the image get there? What are the institutional or social framings of the image? What happens when an image is printed in a newspaper as opposed to a personal website or in an experimental documentary as opposed to a feature film? In this way, by using a visual culture approach to images of falling, I can attend to the specifics of each frame *and* the movement of the image through the entangled mesh. Whilst many studies reference the falling-body image and quickly move beyond it to representations of the image in articles, novels and films, I aim to move with the image through these different frames.

In her response to the 1996 *October* questionnaire on the emerging field of visual culture, Michael Ann Holly asserts that visual culture entails the study of subjects, not objects, “caught in congeries of cultural meaning” (40-1). Although I do not agree with her negation of objects, and believe it is more productive to consider the pliability of the boundary between subject and object, producers and consumers, Holly’s conception of an entangled web of meaning is helpful here. The “route through this tumult”, she continues, “should be overtly acknowledged by the critic”, and “like the lacertine pattern on the carpet page from a medieval gospel book, lines of investigation crisscross and double back on one another” (41). Similarly, Lister and Wells acknowledge that cultural studies is “rather a messy field, lacking precise boundaries and unconstrained by any single set of disciplinary protocols” (90). Furthermore, Mitchell asserts that visual culture is a specific kind of “interdiscipline”, which he labels an “indiscipline”, connected as it is to art history, literature, film studies and anthropology amongst other fields. An “indiscipline”, for Mitchell, is a “turbulence or incoherence at the inner and outer boundaries of disciplines” (“Interdisciplinarity” 541). Although, twenty years later, visual culture is very much a “professional or disciplinary option”, there is still potential to follow images into unexpected places, especially when that image is as overdetermined as Drew’s photograph (Mitchell, “Interdisciplinarity” 542). As an “indiscipline”, then, the study of visual culture is eclectic in its selection and re-purposing of methodologies from various disciplines, as well as experimental in its objects of study and presentation of research (Lister and Wells 64). The object of study for visual culture research, as Marquard Smith explains, is not determined in advance but emerges in the “moments of friction” as researchers attend to the “historical, conceptual, and material specificity of things ... ‘viewing apparatuses’, and our critical encounters with them” (10-11). By juxtaposing such an assortment of examples, my intention is to create a thesis structure that reflects this emergent intersection of images.

0.4.2 The Meshwork

This unfolding and interwoven process reflects another key influence in my thesis: the meshwork. In *The Production of Space* (1991), Henri Lefebvre describes the way in which animals and humans leave “demarcations and orienting markers” on nature’s space as a “meshwork” of “mental and social activity” (117). These “reticular patterns” weave an environment that can be considered “archi-textural” rather than architectural (118). The meshwork is “open on all sides to the strange and the foreign”, and is above all a moving and processual conception of environment (118). Although Lefebvre also uses the word “network” in his description of the production of space, anthropologist Tim Ingold differentiates the meshwork from the network, writing:

The lines of a network, in its contemporary sense, connect the dots ... The lines of the meshwork are the trails *along* which life is lived ... it is in the entanglement of lines, not in the connecting of points, that the mesh is constituted ... The inhabited world is a reticulate meshwork of such trails, which is continually being woven as life goes on along them. (*Lines* 80-4).

In a later work, Ingold explains the difference in more explicit terms by asserting that the network “puts life on the inside, and the world on the outside”, wrapping “lines of flight into bounded points” (*Being Alive* 63), and therefore applies a relational perspective that presupposes a prior separation between entities (Ingold, “Bindings” 1806). In the network, the organism and the connections between organisms are linear and fixed. Pursuing entangled lines of movement in the meshwork behind the image of connected entities in a network, however, presents an alternative topology. The organism in the meshwork is not bounded but is rather an unbounded entanglement of lines in fluid space, moving through or along rather than between (Ingold *Being Alive* 64). “It is not, then, that organisms are entangled in relations”, Ingold writes, “[r]ather, every organism – indeed every thing – is itself an entanglement, a tissue of knots whose constituent strands, as they become tied up with other strands, in other bundles, make up the meshwork” (“Bindings” 1806). It is this texture of

entangled lines that this research aims to explore, participate in and reflect, in order to understand the attacks as entangled within the lines of a meshwork that reaches into varied and unexpected places.

Although Ingold does not address photographs in his exploration of the meshwork, this thesis proposes that images of falling are an integral element of our living, moving environment, of which all participants in the image are also a part. Furthermore, this thesis endorses a messy entanglement of intersecting frames rather than the linear, straightforward connections that the network topology might suggest. A key stepping stone between Ingold's meshwork and this research is the work of Sarah Pink, who frequently writes about the multi-sensory experience of images. Pink applies Ingold's understanding of the meshwork to digital images. In her paper "Sensory digital photographs: re-thinking 'moving' and the image", Pink proposes the necessity of a new paradigm for understanding digital images which acknowledges the "multisensoriality of images", addresses the significance of movement in the production and consumption of images and considers them "components of configuration of place" (4). The sensoriality of images, according to Pink, "is generated through their interrelatedness with both the persons they move with and the environments they move through and are part of" (4). The notion of the network, she argues, is problematized when movement is considered to be essential to perception, knowledge and meaning rather than the connection of static points (8). This is an important distinction for my research as I am not as concerned with connecting images of falling as I am with asking for each case study: how did the falling-body image get here? Along what lines is the image moving and becoming entangled? In this way, I investigate the many paths along which the falling-body image of the September 2001 attacks moves and becomes entangled with other images.

For Pink, viewing images as entangled in the meshwork should be considered an "everyday intensity, whereby images are made, carried, consumed, move forward and open

up potentialities with perceiving embodied persons as part of specific environmental configurations” (“Sensory” 8). Further, the meshwork is a complex binding of “cameras, photographers, video makers, subjects, collaborators [and] any element of the environment” involved in the process of images moving (“Sensory” 8). The meshwork is processual, encouraging a focus on the paths through which photographs are produced and consumed, and asking us to focus on what the image is accompanied by and intertwined with as it moves along these intersecting lines (“Sensory” 8). Although Pink’s essay does not concern 9/11 imagery, her work on the “everyday” production and consumption of digital images, or more broadly on the processes of everyday life explored from the inside, relates to my understanding of the expansive, experiential, multi-sensory and continually unfolding meshwork of falling-body images (see Pink’s *Situating Everyday Life*). Unlike Frost’s assertion that the still photograph freezes time, and therefore suggests that the event itself is a static moment rather than part of an unfolding process, Pink understands digital images as “outcomes of and inspirations within continuous lines that interweave their way through an environment” (“Sensory” 5). Pink’s emphasis on movement, entanglement and the sensory experience of digital images suggests that we can “go forward” with the photographs of people falling from the WTC as they entangle with other images in the meshwork, and therefore with the event as it continues to unfold (“Sensory” 7). In this way, the falling-body continues to be an “everyday intensity” of producers and consumers.

According to Pink, images “form part of a world in which we are continually moving forward and which is the very source of their production and the environment of their consumption” (“Sensory” 7). Pink’s use of the meshwork indicates that the living and moving environment becomes imbricated in the production and consumption of images. Key for Pink’s project of a multisensory understanding of place is geographer Doreen Massey who proposes a conception of space “as the product of interrelations”, “as the sphere of the

possibility of the existence of multiplicity” and “as always under construction” (9). She continues: “Precisely because space ... is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made. It never finishes; never closes. Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far” (9). If space is such an entanglement of unfolding stories, Massey explains, “then places are collections of those stories ... a product of these intersections within that wider setting” (130). The spatial is the “realm of the configuration of potentially dissonant (or concordant) narratives” and places, by relation, are the “foci of the meeting and the nonmeeting of the previously unrelated” (71). Places are for Massey, and by extension Pink, “*spatio-temporal* events” (Massey 130): the “coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing” (Massey 141).

For Pink, Massey’s conceptions of space and place hold a particular significance for the image. Images, as entangled in the ongoing stories that make up “place”, should not be considered images “of” places or things” (“Sensory” 9). Rather, “they are inevitably and unavoidably *in* places: they are produced by moving *through* and not over or on environments”; the image is “*in* place and in movement” rather than representative of a static moment (“Sensory” 9). The work of Pink, Massey and Ingold opens up the possibilities for the falling-body image to be considered a constitutive element in the intertwining processes that coalesce into narratives of place (“Sensory” 9). Considering the image as entangled in a meshwork of lines that knot together to form particular places, but are not bound to those places, allows me to explore the wide circulation of the image and the varied, and sometimes unforeseen, places the image appears. As I suggest in chapters one and three, the WTC site is one of these knots in the meshwork, a knot that is created by the enmeshment of moving bodies. Similarly, in chapters two and four I extend this conception of place to include the Internet and examples of the falling-body image that do not explicitly reference 9/11.

Throughout the thesis, Massey's definition of place as the coming together of the previously unrelated will be key to understanding how we move forward with the image through space. Although critics and writers have observed the way that the 9/11 falling-body images gesture towards other bodies from other contexts, I explore this enmeshment in more thorough and detailed language.¹⁰

The meshwork concept also facilitates a fresh perspective on images of falling by taking in as many different examples as possible to emphasise the expanse of the mesh. Rather than leaping to discuss literary representations of falling, as some studies do, by following the lines of the meshwork closely, I am able to account for the more unusual framings of the fall in news media and on the Internet. Furthermore, although I do not have a chapter dedicated to the fictions of falling, I do approach Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, DeLillo's *Falling Man* and Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) as examples of what accompanies and intertwines with the falling-body image as it moves along the meshwork. Rather than asserting what literary representations of the attacks should or should not do, I view these novels as part of an ever-expanding meshwork. I emphasise that these novelistic framings encourage a sense of intersection and entanglement rather than rupture or unidirectional continuity. I do not assess these texts for their failures, or for how they should have engaged with the event, but for how they frame the falling-body image. Through the meshwork model, I focus on the interweaving paths of life to investigate how we have lived with the image of the falling body for the last fifteen years.

¹⁰ In particular, critics have outlined an entanglement with the falling bodies of September 2001 and Philippe Petit's wire-walk between the towers in 1974. See Muntéan "Men" 171-94, Herren 159-76 and Vanderwees "Tightrope" 228-247.

0.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into four chapters that ripple outwards from an interrogation of the framing of a specific photograph of a person falling from the north tower to its dissemination as an artistic object and in online spaces, to the history of acts of falling and performance at the WTC beyond 9/11 and, finally, to the complex intertwining of joy and buoyancy with the fall to death. In this way, I map out the lines along which the image of the falling body moves as it becomes entangled in the meshwork of falling images. My narrative style is intended to reflect and establish this meshwork, creating a sense of movement, sensory experience and entanglement. By describing in detail the experiences of those involved in the meshwork, this thesis attempts to both follow the journey of the falling-body image after 9/11 and elaborate on the interweaving lines along which these images move. I attend to the rich variety of participants in the production and consumption of falling-body images. The variety of examples will help me, in particular, to approach over-determined representations of falling (both visual and textual) with renewed energy and perspective. It is my aim that the narrative style gives the impression of the texture of this entanglement. Further, by being aware of the images I bring into conversation with Drew's photograph, this thesis becomes a further self-conscious framing of the falling-body image.

The first chapter provides the first sustained and immersive investigation into the initial institutional context of Drew's photograph. The photograph is captured and published in movement. Both the photographer and the journalist, whose story accompanied the photograph in the *New York Times*, gather their material by moving through the city towards the WTC and back to their respective offices. As well as the AP framing, I propose that the accompanying story by veteran *Times* reporter N. R. Kleinfield provides one of the first narrative framings for the photograph. Consequently, I argue that Drew, as an AP photographer, and Kleinfield, as a *Times* reporter, furnish institutional framings for the

image. I explore the significance of these framings for the photograph's long and complex afterlife. In this way, I begin to show why it is significant to identify and analyse *where* the image appears in this coalescing, but not at all new, meshwork. I establish a definition of framing that encompasses a sense of movement to suggest that frames do not signify an inside/outside separation but an unspooling of narrative thread enabling the image to move outward along the meshwork. This definition of framing as part of the meshwork outlines that frames, rather than holding the image still, are actually central to the movement of the image, and can therefore attend to the specific contextual parameters of the image and its "numerous reframings" (Mitchell, *Cloning* 151). My discussion of Drew and Kleinfield moving around the site will inform a reading of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* through Ingold's concept of "ambulatory knowing" (Ingold, "Footprints" 122). This analysis of Foer's novel, as well as the framing practices of the AP, the *Times* and the careers of Drew and Kleinfield, will also open the discussion of the falling-body image as produced and consumed in movement.

Taking up this idea of the frame, the subsequent three chapters move outwards to explore key selected case studies in order to demonstrate the reach of the falling body in the meshwork. The second chapter investigates the various interventions into the falling-body image to question the idea that these images "disappeared" after their initial publication. More specifically, I ask, where did the falling-body photograph "go" after 12 September? Here, framings range from the work of multimedia artist Carolee Schneemann, Junod's *Esquire* article and the presence of Drew's photograph in online memorials, conspiracy theory websites and as a meme. These last two framings in particular have not been discussed in relation to this photograph. In this chapter, I position Junod's article as a framing narrative rather than an authorised source of information for the image. Paying particular attention to the way that the article genders the photograph and denigrates responses to the image,

especially from Internet sources, I propose a topology for the image that encounters alternative narrative framings. Schotzko's phrase "digital access to intimacy" is of particular significance for this chapter (52). The presence of the photograph in Schneemann's work and on the web demonstrates the close contact artists and Internet users have established with the image through digital technology. Although Schneemann and the online conspiracy theorist, for example, are working through different cultural framings, their work demonstrates an intimate response to the image by enacting their own interpretive strategies on the image. Whether by manipulating the photograph, creating new narratives around the image or inscribing onto its surface, these examples of the digital access to intimacy indicate diverse interventions into the image. Rather than disappearing, in other words, the photograph has passed through many hands.

Moving further away from the specific photograph along the meshwork of falling bodies, the third chapter encounters the history of falling and performing bodies at the WTC that are enmeshed with 9/11's falling-body photographs. Whilst the second chapter analyses the interventions of artists, journalists and Internet users into the photograph, this chapter presents two different technological resources that allow the viewer to experience the height of the WTC: 3D film and the GoPro camera. In the first case, I situate French wire-walker Philippe Petit's walk between the twin towers in 1974 within a thick, unruly space of association and interrelation of bodies surrounding the WTC. I propose that the visual re-imagining of Petit's walk on the 9/11 five-year anniversary cover of the *New Yorker*, in the documentary *Man on Wire* (2008), in McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* and, crucially, in Robert Zemeckis' feature 3D film *The Walk* (2015), attest to the meshwork of falling bodies at the site. Further lines in this mesh, I suggest, are the WTC BASE jumps from September 2013 and their attendant GoPro videos released in the spring of 2014. This footage, and the responses to the jumps by the media and the authorities, indicates an entanglement of the

BASE jumpers with those who fell from the towers over a decade before. This chapter employs Pink's ethnographic research, as well as Ingold and Massey's conceptions of place, and Laura Marks's and Jennifer Barker's work on the haptic in cinema. I argue that the BASE jump GoPro footage and *The Walk* allow the viewer to follow the route of the falling body at the WTC, providing a multi-sensory experience of falling that touches or grazes the experience of the BASE jumpers, Petit, and by extension the falling bodies of 11 September, in a way that is ultimately buoyed by the survival of these thrill seekers.

The final chapter picks up the thread of buoyancy to explore three different films that represent the body falling to death as entangled with ideas of lightness and life. I outline this idea of the buoyant fall through a reading of DeLillo's *Falling Man* and the novel's portrayal of the intersection of falling and floating, and its entanglement of bodies. Subsequently, I turn to Alejandro González Iñárritu's Oscar-winning satirical black comedy *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (2014) as seen through its enmeshment with an earlier work in his filmography: his contribution to the collaborative film project *11'09''01: September 11* (2002). I suggest that these two films enact a representation of falling that allows for death to co-exist with life as a result of the enmeshment of multiple contradictory narratives and movements. Moving beyond New York to the other side of the country, I interrogate this same co-existence in the falling suicide at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco in experimental film *The Joy of Life* (2005) and documentary *The Bridge* (2006). In many ways, these final examples push the limits of the meshwork I have outlined in the previous three chapters. *Birdman*, *The Joy of Life* and *The Bridge* make no explicit reference to Drew's photograph, the falling bodies of 9/11 or even the WTC but, I suggest, their presentation of the falling body is inextricably tied to the journey of the falling body through 9/11 and beyond. I argue that through the intersection of falling and flying or buoyancy, these films present the fall to death as ultimately, and problematically, enmeshed with the fall into life.

Falling as both ending and affirming life in these films indicates the complete enmeshment of the event, and of Drew's photograph, almost to the point where it cannot be seen. This correlation, I propose, complicates the understanding of the destruction of the WTC as a rupture after which the world was never the same again.

1. Richard Drew and N.R. Kleinfield: Falling, Framing and Walking

1.1 Two Men at the Trade Center

When the first plane hit the north tower, veteran Associated Press (AP) photographer Richard Drew was on an assignment in Bryant Park documenting a maternity fashion show. It was his first day back at work after covering the U.S. Open. He was setting up his equipment at the end of the runway when he received a call from his editor to leave the shoot and head to the towers. Drew took the subway to the World Trade Center (WTC), arriving at around 9:00 a.m., and saw that both towers were now on fire. He immediately started taking photographs (Stern). N. R. Kleinfield, a *New York Times* reporter with forty years of experience, had arrived early at the *Times* headquarters on West 43rd Street, just half a mile from Bryant Park. Kleinfield was preoccupied with researching a story on polling stations as it was primary day for New York's mayoral elections. He initially believed the report of the first plane hitting the WTC to be a terrible accident, but when he saw the live footage of the second plane on television, he immediately gathered three notebooks and headed downtown. He took a taxi, getting out a few blocks from the towers, and then started running towards the WTC just as the first building, the south tower, collapsed at 9:58 a.m. (Pompeo).

After the south tower collapsed, Drew was reluctant to leave the area, so hid from a police officer in order to keep taking photographs. Switching to a smaller lens, Drew turned his camera to the remaining north tower. But just as he started taking pictures, Drew recounts, "the top of the building exploded and mushroomed out", and the north tower collapsed just before 10:30 a.m. "All that debris started coming towards me", Drew states, "so I said to myself, 'I think it's time to go'" (qtd. in Stern). Kleinfield had retreated north away from the destruction of the south tower and watched as the smoke dissipated:

I stood there and the sky steadily cleared and I looked upon what was the most frightening thing I had ever experienced. One tower had entirely disappeared. And I stood there and watched in disbelief as the second tower crumbled. I spent the next

few hours there numb to what I had seen. I managed to fall back on professional instinct and interview people mainly because nothing seemed real at that point. (qtd. in email).

With both towers gone, Drew had to walk the four miles uptown to the AP office, then located in the Rockefeller Center. Covered in dust, when someone asked where he had been, he answered: “I was at the World Trade Center” (qtd. in Stern). Whilst Drew had his photographs, Kleinfield set to work after the towers had collapsed by interviewing those around him, stating that “[i]t was the easiest possible situation to talk to people in, because all people wanted to do was talk” (qtd. in Pompeo). Later, with this material in hand, Kleinfield began his own three-mile walk to the *Times* office, the pages of his notebooks stained with ash (Pompeo).

Back in his office, Drew began carefully scouring through the hundreds of photographs he had taken: “I started looking at the pictures of the falling people. I called one of the senior editors ... over to start looking at the images with me, and I said ‘I really like this one.’ It really hits you: just something, that certain something that you recognise” (qtd. in Singer). This photograph was the seventh frame in an eleven-frame sequence tracking a person as they fell from the north tower. This image as well as all the other AP photographs were transmitted to the newsrooms of member newspapers all over the country, including the *Times* (Singer). At around 7:00 p.m., Kleinfield filed his story and never read it again (Pompeo). On 12 September, Kleinfield’s article appeared in a single column on the front page of the *Times*. Drew’s photograph is the sole image for the continuation of the article on page seven of the paper (Figure 0.2). Although Kleinfield did not personally choose the photograph to accompany his article, his writing still furnishes the photograph with its first narrative frame (qtd. in email correspondence). Furthermore, as one of the most highly circulated and prestigious newspapers in America, the *Times* provides an especially recognisable and significant framing for the photograph.

“The picture went all around the world”, Tom Junod writes in his article for *Esquire*, “and then disappeared, as if we willed it away”. Drew’s photograph, according to Junod, only re-emerged in the two years after the attacks on “shock sites” with falling-body photographs, or in the form of artistic representations of falling such as Eric Fischl’s sculpture *Tumbling Woman* (2002) that encountered huge resistance (Melnick 92). As I suggested in the introduction, from the outset media investigations into the falling-body image framed Drew’s photograph as highly contentious, as an image from which people not only chose to, but should, look away. “[R]esistance to the image”, Junod writes, “started early, started immediately, started on the ground” with witnesses and news crews turning away from the sight of people jumping (“The Falling Man”). But something else “started on the ground” as well: two journalists from esteemed organisations started field assignments that would lead to the circulation of the photograph amongst thousands the next day. In other words, before Drew’s photograph became “The Falling Man”, photographic pariah and symbol of censorship in Junod’s narrative, it was a news photograph without a title in a national newspaper. These initial framings of the photograph are essential to understanding the entanglement of the photograph in the meshwork of falling-body images. Taken by a photographer from a global news agency and published in the self-proclaimed “newspaper of record”, the first framings of this photograph are particularly striking in relation to the subjective, experimental and unauthorised framings I explore in later chapters (Clausen 17).

As a result, this chapter focuses on the initial framings of the image, namely the institutional framings of the AP and the *Times*. Although many studies of Drew’s photograph mention both Drew’s professional background and the appearance of the photograph in the *Times*, there has been limited critical attention afforded to these first framings and no textual

analysis of Kleinfield's article.¹¹ Throughout, I emphasise the primacy of movement in the production and initial circulation of the photograph. I begin by examining in detail the significance of Drew's image as a news photograph taken by an AP photojournalist. Furthermore, Drew has a history of photographing both destruction at the WTC site, and a person at the point of death. This chapter will explore the significance of Drew's background for the production and initial circulation of his photograph. What does it mean for the image that it is an AP photograph? How does Drew's career as a photojournalist inform the way that he took his photographs during the attacks? Even though newspapers and news programmes withheld photographs such as Drew's from their coverage in the weeks and months after the attacks, its presence in the *Times* means that for one day at least hundreds of thousands of people saw the photograph.¹² Consequently, this chapter will assess the implications of the presence of Drew's photograph in one of the most widely circulated newspapers in America and most recognisable news institutions in the world, and how this initial framing shaped the photograph's complex afterlife. The *Times* has its own framing conventions in a similar fashion to the AP. Kleinfield, like Drew, has a history reporting on acts of destruction at the WTC, and also his own writing style resulting from his "on the ground" reporting. This chapter will provide a textual analysis of Kleinfield's article as the first narrative framing of the photograph.

In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the intersecting journeys of Drew and Kleinfield on 11 September as they walked around the WTC and then returned to their respective offices. The discussion suggests that whilst the photograph arrests a falling person's motion, it is created through movement: firstly, by Drew himself as mobile

¹¹ For studies that mention these first framings, see Apitzsch 97, Faulkner 70, Kroes 5, Mauro 584 and Lurie 181.

¹² By May 2002, the national circulation of the *Times* had risen to 1,194,000, an increase of almost four percent from the previous year (Barringer).

photographer, walking as he takes the photograph; secondly by Kleinfield's "on the ground" news gathering and resulting story that uses physical movement as the muscular basis for his narrative. By bringing the stories of Drew and Kleinfield together, and exploring the significance of their movements on that day, I am able to provide a reading of the falling-body image in Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005) that allows for an understanding of movement in the production and consumption of the image. The image made in movement allows for a definition of framing as something that is also processual. Institutional frames, such as the AP and the *Times*, as well as Drew and Kleinfield's journalistic careers and relationship with the towers, shape and furnish the photograph but can never contain the image. Instead, as this chapter will now suggest, the framing process is one of interweaving lines rather than an enclosed structure. A photograph, even one as abstracted as Drew's image has come to be, is already an entanglement of lines pertaining to the contexts in which it was created and used. It is essential to return to these initial framings to understand how the image was circulated so widely, and how the event has become entangled in narratives far beyond the specific geographic or temporal parameters of the attacks. A definition of framing for the falling-body image, therefore, must encompass the way that the image can move as well as particular framing practices for each appearance of the image.

1.2 The Framing Narrative

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag writes that "the photographic image, even to the extent that it is a trace ... cannot be simply a transparency of something that happened. It is always the image that someone chose; *to photograph is to frame, and to frame is to exclude*" (41, emphasis added). The falling-body image was selected from a sequence of eleven frames of the same person falling, disseminated by the AP, and then selected again from the slew of images to appear in the *Times*. My understanding of the framing of the

falling-body image, however, is to keep the possibilities for the image as open as possible, and for the frame to play an active role in the meshwork. Therefore, I ask, is there something more to framing than merely a boundary between inside and outside? In *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Roland Barthes famously differentiates two elements of the photograph: the *studium* and the *punctum*. The *studium* is “a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment ... but without special acuity” whereas the *punctum*, famously, is what “rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me” (26-7). In a photograph without a *punctum* “everything which happens within the frame dies absolutely once this frame is passed beyond” (57). If there is a *punctum* in the photograph, however, “a blind field is created”, an imagined world beyond what is actually seen in the image (57). The image with a *punctum* “takes the spectator outside its frame” causing Barthes to think that the *punctum* “is a kind of subtle *beyond*”, launching us *beyond* what we can see within any specific frame (59). However “lightening-like” the *punctum* may be, it has “a power of expansion” (45). In Barthes’ terminology, then, the frame does not necessarily exclude and the image can expand beyond the specific frame.

As will be shown in later chapters, this thesis is very much concerned with this idea of “beyond” or the movement of the image itself beyond specific temporal and geographic parameters. Even though he indicates that the frames of certain photographs create further narratives that launch the viewer *beyond*, inherent in Barthes’ description is the notion that frames still perform a delimiting function. The *punctum* is also problematic in itself, becoming a ubiquitous and under-theorised vehicle in academic writing about the falling-body image for a personal response to the photograph, or to identify the certain small detail that isolates Drew’s photograph from the other falling-body images, or in some cases to not

say anything at all.¹³ The punctum does not necessarily help us to understand the reach of the falling-body image. W. J. T. Mitchell does not offer a definition of the frame, or more specifically to his work “reframing”, and yet the frame is an important part of his discussion of the Abu Ghraib archive. For instance, when discussing the infamous Abu Ghraib photograph of “the Bagman”, a hooded man stood on a box being tortured by the threat of electrocution, Mitchell writes that “[g]uerrilla artists around the world found ways to reframe, mutate, and multiply the figure in an astonishing variety of ways” (*Cloning* 104). He subsequently writes that “new versions” of a photograph “have the effect of reframing the past” (*Cloning* 147). Finally, he asks “[h]ow can we get at the precise meaning of this image in a way that respects its pictorial as well as its historical and political specificity, while reckoning with its circulation in a world of images, and its numerous reframings and mutations?” (*Cloning* 151). Mitchell’s use of “reframe” evidently indicates that there are multiple frames, and that framing is a continual process as the image “moves” through time, both reaching backwards and projecting forwards. He does not detail how an image can be reframed, or framed in the first place, however, nor does he define the frame. My understanding of framing seeks to explore specificity and circulation in more precise language.

In *Frames of War*, Judith Butler also explores the idea of the frame in relation to photographs from the “War on Terror”. Unlike Mitchell’s work, however, Butler offers a far more thorough and focused definition of the frame:

When a picture is framed, any number of ways of commenting on or extending the picture may be at stake ... [T]o call the frame into question is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limn, that something was already outside, made the very sense of the inside possible, recognizable ... Something

¹³ See Schotzko 33, Fitzpatrick 88-91, Munteán “Men” 175-80, C. Johnston 34. James Elkins has written extensively about the under-theorisation of the *punctum* in his counter-narrative to *Camera Lucida*, *What Photography Is*, especially in chapters one and two.

exceeds the frame that troubles our sense of reality; in other words, something occurs that does not conform to our established understanding of things. (8-9).

Here, Butler suggests that, for a picture to be framed, must mean that something lies beyond the parameters of the frame in the first place. That photographs such as Drew's falling-body image are framed and then reframed disavows any "single 'context'" for the image (9).

"Although the image surely lands in new contexts", Butler explains, "it also creates new contexts by virtue of that landing, becoming a part of the very process through which new contexts are delimited and formed" (9). This statement echoes in some part Mitchell's consideration that later versions of an image remember and transform earlier ones and also reframe that past (*Cloning* 147). Images can enter new frames of representation and also, once there, create further frames of representation. Framing is processual and kinetic, meaning that each frame must "break from itself as it moves through space and time" (10). Butler's understanding of the frames of war as eliminating, as much as they present, underlines the dynamics of power controlling what is seen and unseen (Butler, "Torture" 953).

Acknowledging that Butler has a specific agenda in her use of the frame, my project seeks to emphasise that every photograph is already framed by the institutional (or otherwise) framing of its production and by every instance of its circulation. For the photograph to be published in the *Times* and turned into a meme or cartoon, or for it to be obliquely referenced in a GoPro BASE jump video and big budget Hollywood films, means that distinctive framing conventions are at work on the image. Each reframing of the photograph has its own particular framing narratives, enmeshing the image in various technologies, modes of knowledge and mediums of representation. In her essay on the Abu Ghraib photographs, Butler mentions that certain images were published in the *Times* and other newspapers, others were not, and that the "scene of the photograph" was extended when the photographs became public knowledge, encompassing the "entire social sphere in which the photograph is shown,

seen, censored, publicized, discussed, and debated” (“Torture” 957). My understanding of framing asserts that each of these instances constitutes a frame for the photograph, and deserves attention. The frame can be a tool to follow and document the innumerable ways an image is circulated, adapted, pulled apart, mocked, memorialised and interrogated, as well as a way to ascertain how the public is encouraged to recognise or reject the content of an image.

In his re-thinking of Butler’s frame, Daniel O’Gorman seeks to address her conception of the frame “as a structure inflexible enough to be exploded” (661) when she states that “self-breaking becomes part of the very definition” of the frame (*Frames* 10). Instead, through an analysis of Dave Eggers’ *What Is the What* (2006), O’Gorman presents a language of framing that eschews an inside/outside dichotomy for a “hybridity”, an “interweaving”, which recognises “the overlap between multiple coexisting, occasionally incommensurable realities, and as such to emphasise the degree to which human experience, and in particular the experience of violence, is shared” (665-66). The text “reconfigures the reader’s reality not by exploding the frame by which it is limned, but by challenging its perceived coherence”, rendering this boundary “mellifluous” and weaving “[a]rbitrarily delineated categories” into a “complex and multitudinous *mesh* of realities” (667-69, emphasis added). Rather than “exploding a dominant frame”, then, O’Gorman suggests that Butler’s desire for “new constellations for thinking about normativity” (*Frames* 144-5) can be achieved by reshaping or rejecting dominant frames (666). As Werner Wolf details:

there can be no framing activity without previously given frames which are applied, modified, rejected or supplemented by other or even entirely new frames ... [O]n the one hand artefacts, like other signifying practices, are based on given frames, but on the other hand artefacts can also be results of, or elicit, activities that lead to the emergence of new frames. (4).

What is essential here is that the framing activity relies upon previous frames remaining intact, rather than being destroyed. Whilst O’Gorman calls, in his conclusion, for the reader

to move “beyond the language of the frame”, this chapter calls for a movement *with* the frame through the meshwork of interweaving lines that coalesce around the falling-body image (671). The frame can still be a radical mechanism through which to explore the unruly mass of entangled images.

Whilst O’Gorman seeks to replace the language of the frame with the multitudinous mesh, art historian Patricia Allmer defines the frame as a structure that actively creates a mesh of interlacing narratives. In “Framing the Real: Frames and Processes of Framing in René Magritte’s Oeuvre”, Allmer seeks to present frames in Magritte’s paintings as a “deconstruction of the conventional concept of the frame as boundary, border, a ‘system of detachment’” (113). She explores the boundary itself as “*something which binds things together rather than keeps them apart*, creating a dialectical and sometimes unstable interdependency between inside and outside” (114, emphasis added). In a similar fashion, Ingold writes that it is in the “binding together of lines ... that the mesh is constituted” (*Being Alive* 152), and that bindings can no more “contain the world, or enclose it, than does a knot contain the threads from which it is tied” (“Bindings” 1803). The frame as binding does not separate an inside and outside, or enclose an image from its processes of production and consumption. The word frame, Allmer continues, “refers, amongst other things, to ‘a loom’, a ‘machine in which yarn or thread is woven into fabric by the crossing of threads’” (115). Allmer asks “[i]s the frame a structure, perhaps a machine, in which criss-crossing narrative threads weave narratives? Is it to be understood as a structure that enables narratives to happen?” (115). There is no “outside” of the frame, she continues, “only eternal frames and framing processes” (130). The frame is the mechanism which enables the activity for further frames, frames that may resist, accept or reshape “dominant” frames. Although photography scholars Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis, in their exploration of the digital image as it moves through time, propose that the digital, “networked” image is “continuous, *frameless*,

multiple and processual” (32, emphasis added), I suggest that the Drew’s falling-body photograph, like Allmer’s understanding of Magritte’s work, is *frame-full*. With ever more rapid circulation, the number of frames becomes difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain.

In summary, I argue that the frame constitutes each specific instance where the photograph is produced and consumed. For example, in this chapter, I will outline the institutional frames of the AP and the *Times* as interconnecting, ensuring that Drew’s falling-body photograph would be widely disseminated to newsrooms and then widely circulated in the newspaper the next day. As frames, the AP and the *Times* have their own idiosyncratic framing narratives, as does the previous work of Drew and Kleinfield. These frames, however, do not and cannot contain the photograph. The frame is a binding rather than boundary, a structure that actively *enables* further frames by the creation of lines or threads along which the falling-body image can move into different contexts, and be framed by those contexts. The frame does not enclose but rather expands the possibilities for the image. These lines of interconnection that make up the meshwork of the image brought the image to my attention via the frames of academic scholarship and popular culture. In turn, this thesis becomes a framing for the photograph as I bring the image into an entanglement with various other instances of the falling-body image. A diagram of these frames might label some of them “Associated Press photographer”, “Robert Kennedy”, “1993 WTC bombing” and “*New York Times*”, or perhaps “Conspiracy Theory”, “Meme”, “Philippe Petit” and “BASE jumping” as knots within an entangled mesh. These threads interweave to create a thick “intensity of entangled lines in movement”, and then create new frames and narratives (Pink “Sensory” 8). As the following chapters will suggest, these threads can lead us to some unexpected places with the falling-body image. The frame provides the solid ground from which to investigate these relentless, uncontrollable lines of entanglement.

1.3 “A photojournalist is very much like an athlete”: Richard Drew’s Photograph

1.3.1 Richard Drew

Richard Drew gave one of his first interviews after the attacks in October 2001 with Peter Howe for the *Digital Journalist*, a monthly online magazine about photojournalism.¹⁴ This issue, entitled “Seeing the Horror”, is dedicated to photojournalism’s response to and coverage of the attacks. Here, Drew recounts taking some photographs of people jumping:

I was standing next to a very nice policeman from the 13th precinct, and all of a sudden he said “Oh my gosh, look at that!” I looked up and there were people coming out of the building. Falling or jumping from the building ... we must have seen six or eight or maybe more people and I was photographing them as they were coming down. It was quite something to see. We were watching one guy, who is in one of my photographs that has been published a lot, some guy was actually clinging to the outside of the building, outside on the girders. He had a white shirt on. We were watching him for the longest time while all these other people were falling, and I alternated between that and this other stuff, then there was the huge rumbling sound ... I had no idea it was the building falling ... the top of the second tower poofed out, and I held my finger on the trigger, and made nine frames of this building cascading down, the North Tower, then the camera stopped shooting, because it takes nine frames then stops. Then I said “I’ve got to get out of here!” and I ran a block and a half north to Stuyvesant High School.

Only then, after Drew has told of his escape into the school, does the photographer mention the photograph that would become “The Falling Man”:

The one image that’s been causing a lot of discussion is ... of a man falling head-first from the building ... He was trapped in the fire, and decided to jump and take his own life, rather than being burned ... and that has caused a lot of controversy among readers of newspapers that used the picture ... This was a very important part of the story. It wasn’t just a building falling down, there were people involved in this.

This photograph, the only image on the page, is isolated from Drew’s personal account of that day. Instead, Drew focuses on another figure, the man in the white shirt clinging to the outside of the tower, during his description of what happened. Even in this early narrative, what would become “The Falling Man” is framed as outside or beyond the photographer’s

¹⁴ A version of this interview appeared in a special 9/11 issue of the magazine *American Photo* for January/February 2002 in partnership with the *Digital Journalist* (“It wasn’t just a building falling down”).

experience on that day. At the end of the interview, Drew rather stoically emphasises his professional attitude, stating:

It's part of the history that I have been able to photograph in my lifetime for the AP, whether it be a car wreck, or a fashion show, or *this thing*. I just have to place it in that file drawer where you say, "I have covered major stuff", and this will go in that major file drawer. I just go on and do my thing. I have covered the stock market 3 or 4 days or more since this has happened and *whatever else has to be done, that's what I will do*. (Emphasis added).

For Drew, at this point, his 9/11 photographs have been absorbed into the extended history of his professional photographic career. Going from an (interrupted) project at a fashion show to photographing the destruction of the WTC to covering the economic ramifications of the attacks, Drew's work continues and his photographs, including falling-body photographs, are filed away in the "major file drawer".

Ten years later, however, it is clear to see that this particular photograph did not remain in the drawer. I have already quoted Drew's interview with the *Daily Beast* in September 2011 at the start of this chapter where he explains how he came to be at the WTC. Drew's narrative in 2011 bears some similarities to its 2001 counterpart. Both accounts start with Drew leaving the fashion show in order to cover the disaster at the WTC, then describe members of the emergency services directing Drew's gaze to people falling from the burning buildings, and Drew subsequently taking multiple pictures of those people. In both accounts, too, Drew details the lens he was using in order to capture these images. What is strikingly different, of course, is that in the *Daily Beast* account, Drew's falling-body photograph takes a central place in his narration of what happened:

I immediately started photographing people ... I ended up at the northwest corner of West and Vesey Street – where the Goldman Sachs building is now ... I had a perfect view of both buildings and figured that was where I could cover the assignment. I had a Nikon DCS-620, which was one of their early models—a hybrid Kodak-Nikon camera—and I was using a 70-200mm zoom lens. And I did my assignment.

Myself as a photojournalist I'm like a first responder ... The camera is like a filter for me, too. It's not like I'm experiencing it, I'm seeing it through my camera ...

I was standing next to a New York City police officer and a woman who was an EMT ... The EMT then pointed up and said, “Oh my god, look!” And that’s when we noticed people coming down from the building ... I was photographing several people coming down from the building and I have a sequence of photographs of this guy coming down. The camera captured the photograph in a sequence, since it had a motor drive on it, so the camera captured a moment. If the camera functioned a fraction of a second earlier, I wouldn’t have had that picture. It was the camera that captured the photograph, not my eye and quick finger. Can you imagine how fast people fall? They’re falling really fast, and while you’re photographing this you have to pan with them so I picked this guy up in my viewfinder, put my finger on the button, and kept taking pictures while he was falling. I had to time my vertical motion of the camera to his descent ...

I picked up my camera and just as I started to do that, the top of the building exploded and mushroomed out from the North Tower. All that debris started coming towards me so I said to myself, “I think it’s time to go”. I made my way up North End and ran into Stuyvesant High School. (qtd. in Stern).

Here, the photograph is entangled in a complex mass of falling bodies, camera equipment and shocked witnesses. Unlike the earlier interview, the falling-body image is enmeshed in Drew’s experience of the day. The position of Stuyvesant High School in the narratives can be seen as a marker of the differences between the two articles. In 2001, it marked the end of the “action” narrative and the beginning of the isolated exploration of the photograph; in 2011, the escape into the school is preceded by an intense intertwining of the photograph with Drew’s camera, and a lengthy exploration of the moment of capturing the photograph. The photograph becomes an integral part of Drew’s experience.

Why this transformation in how Drew discusses the photograph? Firstly, and most obviously, ten years elapsed between the interviews. In that decade, Drew’s photograph became “The Falling Man” after Junod’s article and Singer’s documentary. The titles of these interviews reflect the changing perspective towards Drew’s photograph: moving from “Richard Drew” in the *Digital Journalist* to “9/11’s Iconic ‘Falling Man’” in the *Daily Beast*. In 2011, the emphasis shifts towards a heightened awareness of continuing fascination with the photograph. Secondly, as frames for the photograph, these two publications are markedly different. The *Digital Journalist*, established in 1997, is a publication vested in the practice of

photojournalism. At seventeen, editor Dirck Halstead was *LIFE* magazine's youngest combat photographer, covering the Guatemalan Civil War, going on to become the United Press International's picture bureau chief in Saigon during the Vietnam War. Furthermore, the interviewer, Howe, was the former Picture Editor for the *New York Times Magazine* and Director of Photography for *LIFE* magazine ("Masthead and Credits"). The *Daily Beast* is a news and opinion website with topics ranging from politics to pop culture, taking its name from the fictional newspaper in Evelyn Waugh's satirical novel *Scoop* (1938) ("Tina Brown resurrects Waugh's *Daily Beast*"). This self-conscious naming reflects the way the *Daily Beast* often produces satirical, colourful and humorous writing, amongst its responses to world events. The evolving frame for Drew's account of that day reflects the journey of the photograph from part of the photojournalist's archive to pop culture artefact.

Whilst the *Digital Journalist* piece isolates Drew's photograph from his narration of the day, it is also more concerned with Drew as a photojournalist, relaying both his professional instinct and stoicism in the face of what happened. As a result, the language is distinctly sombre and factual. What is immediately striking about Drew's 2011 narrative, in contrast, is the level of autonomy he invests in his camera and his description of taking the photograph as an almost supernatural act. Drew emphatically asserts that the photograph is the result of his camera's accuracy and speed, rather than his own skill. With his camera in continuous shooting mode, Drew did not have to keep pressing the shutter release button (qtd. in Stern). In another interview in 2011, for radio station WNYC, Drew asserts even more plainly "I didn't push the button. That was a frame that the camera took" (qtd. in Mayer). In both interviews, too, Drew also describes his camera as a "filter": "The camera is like a filter for me, too. It's not like I'm experiencing it, I'm seeing it through my camera" (qtd. in Stern) and "I guess for me the camera is a filter between what's going on and what I do. I'm just there and I'm recording history" (qtd. in Mayer). Drew's direct question in the *Daily Beast*

narrative (“Can you imagine how fast people fall?”) also attests to the way the camera seems to function beyond the capacities of human motion.

Although Drew seems to want to distance himself from the moment the photograph was taken, his *Daily Beast* narrative underlines the complex enmeshment of photographer, camera and falling body, and the connecting lines of movement between them. To illustrate this point, I will turn briefly to Mark Z. Danielewski’s experimental novel *House of Leaves* (2000). Will Navidson is a photojournalist who decides to document the inexplicable re-shaping of his house which comes to be larger on the inside than it is on the outside. Navidson’s story is told through a study of the resulting documentary film by an old man named Zampanò, the manuscript of which is discovered by the first-person narrator, Johnny Truant. The recorded footage is, then, lost in an ever-more complex and confusing mesh of layering narratives, expanding like the interior of the house. Navidson, like Drew, has an intense desire to investigate the unfolding events. In his record, Zampanò writes that “[p]hotojournalism has frequently been lambasted for being the product of circumstance”, as the “happy intersection of event and opportunity” (419). But, he counters, “the celerity with which a moment of history is seized testifies to the extraordinary skill required” (419). “A photojournalist is”, he continues,

very much like an athlete. Similar to hockey players or bodybuilders, they have learned and practiced over and over again very specific movements. But great photographers must not only commit to reflex those physical demands crucial to handling a camera, they must also refine and internalize aesthetic sensibilities. There is no time to think through what is valuable to a frame and what is not. Their actions must be entirely instinctual, immediate, and the result of years and years of study, hard work and of course talent. (419).

This sense of athleticism and practiced movement resounds in Drew’s *Daily Beast* account even as he asserts that the camera was solely responsible for the photograph. Drew easily and instinctively moves from covering the tennis tournament to a fashion show to a terrorist attack. The immediacy with which Drew started taking photographs, ending up with a

“perfect view” of the towers, reflects the learned bodily movements he had harnessed through decades of experience (Stern). At the time of the attacks, Drew had been working for the AP for thirty-one years, and still continues to work at the agency. In 2003, Drew stated that he “took it [the photograph] from [his] own angle” (“The Horror”). That perfect view was a result of Drew’s *own angle*: an experienced awareness of his own body and where to find the ideal viewing position.

In her analysis of the multisensoriality of bullfighting photographs, Sarah Pink writes that whilst it may seem that the photographer is working from a static position, she or he is “never absolutely still” and, moreover, “the photographer is meant to know what it is to move like a bullfighter, to be able to feel her or himself into the moves made by the performer ... to take the photograph at the right moment and be able to anticipate performer and bull’s next move” (“Sensory” 9-10). The photographer uses their “practical experience to become corporeally engaged” with the movements of the bullfighter (“Sensory” 10). The resulting images, Pink asserts, “are only possible because they are part of the photographer’s movement with the performance, her or his corporeal engagement with it” (“Sensory” 11). Without the photographer’s movement and awareness of the bullfighter’s movement, the camera could not have taken the photograph. Pink defines these bullfight photographs as “corporeal images”, a term borrowed from ethnographic filmmaker and visual anthropologist David MacDougall. Corporeal images, MacDougall writes, are “not just images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world”, referring back “to the photographer at the moment of their creation, at the moment of an encounter” (3). Pink interprets the corporeal image as implying that “both producing and viewing images are corporeal practices” (“Sensory” 11) in that we “see with our bodies” and the images we make carry the “imprint of our bodies” (MacDougall 3).

Bullfight photographs and, as I am suggesting, Drew's falling-body photograph are the result of an affective, multisensory enmeshment of bodies. Although Drew's camera was automatically taking photographs, it was Drew who tracked the person as they fell, timing the "vertical motion" of his camera to the person's descent. Like the photographer's corporeal awareness of the bullfighter's movements, Drew performs a version of the fall himself. Even though Drew seeks to remove his own body from the action of taking the photograph in the *Daily Beast* narrative, his words only emphasise the entanglement of photographer, camera and subject moving in the meshwork. Unlike the *Digital Journalist* interview, the photograph is framed by his later accounts as produced in movement, the movement of the photojournalist-as-athlete. As I mentioned in the introduction, Laura Frost concludes that the still photographs of falling bodies arrest motion and therefore reflect "a tendency to think of 9/11 as a moment frozen in time, as a city's and a nation's disaster, rather than as part of a political process that is still unfolding" (201). I suggest, however, that we can reimagine Drew's photograph as one created in movement, and framed in movement in the *Daily Beast* narrative. The photograph is not, then, *of* a body frozen in the act of falling, but a complex enmeshment of the falling body and the photographer working in movement. Taking this view into consideration, we can therefore begin to unravel Frost's conclusion about the falling-body photographs and to consider the event itself as a participant in a moving, unfolding meshwork. As I will now explore, reconsidering the institutional framing of the photograph opens up this consideration even further.

1.3.2 "Get it first, get it fast, get it right": Robert Kennedy and the Associated Press

As Tom Junod writes, Drew has had the "presence of mind" to attend to the manufacture of history since he was a young man ("The Falling Man"). In particular, during his career as a photojournalist, Drew has photographed both a person at the point of death, and destruction at

the WTC site. In 1968, at the age of twenty-one, Drew was working as a photographer for the *Pasadena Independent-Star News* covering Robert F. Kennedy's victory over Eugene McCarthy in the California primary presidential elections. He had not been assigned the story but he turned up at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles to document proceedings nonetheless. Towards the end of Kennedy's speech he headed to the kitchen for some water, at some point Kennedy must have also entered the kitchen. Moments later Kennedy was shot in the head by Sirhan Sirhan. At this point, Drew was walking behind Kennedy and instinctively hit the floor when he saw the gun. Then, he climbed on top of a table and began taking photographs of Kennedy as he lay on the floor (Figure 1.1). He was one of only four photographers at the scene. His only regret, he said in retrospect, was that he did not have a flash (qtd. in E. Johnston). His jacket was spattered with Kennedy's blood (Junod "The Falling Man"). Two years later, Drew would start working at the AP (Howe).

Whereas in September 2001 Drew was looking up towards the top floors of the north tower as people started to fall, in June 1968 he was looking down as Kennedy lay bleeding on the ground. Again, he had found his angle. The resulting photograph captures Kennedy's head and torso with bystanders tending to him. His face appears in heavy chiaroscuro, his eyes and forehead almost completely obscured by shadow. There are some compositional similarities between the two images. Kennedy's body is framed by the arms and hands of those helping him, as the falling person is framed by the towers. Also, the patterns of light and shade find a parallel in the contrast between the north and south towers in the later image. There is a sense of peace in the photograph, too. Unlike other images of this moment, Kennedy's face and body are not contorted in pain or shock. Similarly, the person in Drew's falling-body photograph appears to not show any signs of distress. In both instances, Drew did not plan to be at the centre of a disaster. In 2001, he was on assignment elsewhere and in

1968, he did not have an assignment at all. But, also in both cases, Drew reacted instinctively, responding to unexpected events as they unfolded.

According to George Freund of the website “Conspiracy Café”, an online resource for a range of conspiracy theories, Drew seems to “have all the luck” when it comes to being in the right place at the right time. Rather irreverently, Freund makes the connection that both Kennedy and the falling person died near Drew, continuing: “Those around him seem to be without any luck at all. I mean the guy should wear the homicide squad T shirt. ‘My day begins when your day ends’”. In an article for the *Los Angeles Times* in 2003, Drew writes:

I have photographed dying. As a 21-year-old rookie photographer ... I was standing behind Robert F. Kennedy when he was assassinated. That time, there was no telephoto lens to distance me. I was so close that his blood spattered onto my jacket. I saw the life bleed out of him ... Pictures that, shot through my tears, still distress me after 35 years. But nobody refused to print them, as they did the 9/11 photo. Nobody looked away.

Drew is once again in the midst of everything, but here it is blood rather than dust which he carries away with the photographs. It is worth noting that Drew views his Kennedy photograph through the frame of his 9/11 photograph. The link between both photographic situations is an instinctual and professional bodily awareness towards the body *in extremis*; a bodily awareness through which Drew knows to climb on the kitchen counter or raise his camera to the upper floors of the WTC and pan with the falling body. Covered in blood and dust, Drew’s body is an integral part of the photographic process.

In an interview with CNN on 11 October 2001, Drew talks news anchor Paula Zahn through some of the photographs he took the month before. After discussing images of the towers collapsing and witnesses running, Zahn turns the conversation towards Drew’s other photographs: “We didn’t show the picture that you took that was seen in so many newspapers across the country, people jumping out of the tower – out of respect for the families, of course, who are ending the 30-day mourning period ... In retrospect, how do you feel about

taking those pictures?” Again, as in the *Digital Journalist* piece, this photograph is isolated from the rest. Zahn’s question also frames the witness of these photographs as somehow disrespectful. Whilst photographs of the buildings and onlookers are permissible, those who jumped are annexed from the visual archive. To Zahn’s question, Drew replies:

I look at it in that there are images that we have seen in our newspapers – we’ve seen AP photographer Nick Ut’s picture of the little girl running from the napalm in Vietnam, we’ve seen AP photographer Eddie Adams’s picture of the Saigon police chief executing the man on the street; then we see AP photographer John Filo’s picture of the girl bending over the fallen student at Kent State. Those are all images that we all thought we didn’t want to see, and there was controversy about them all, but it’s part of the story. You have to tell the story. You can’t just turn your head and stop.

In response to Zahn isolating the photograph, Drew emphatically restores and reframes it within a long history of AP images that have challenged and provoked through various crises, but remain indelibly a part of the representation of that crisis. Situating his photograph in this company emphasises the place of the image within wider visual histories of conflict and death, but also within an institutional context.

Established in 1846, the AP is one of the largest and, self-professed, “most trusted” newsgathering agencies (“About Us”). Five New York daily newspapers started the venture as a way to fund a pony express route through Alabama in order to retrieve news about the Mexican Civil War faster than the telegram service along existing postal routes would allow (“AP’s History”). One of the founders was Henry Raymond who would subsequently co-found the *New York Times* in 1851 (Hanley 173). Current board members include Steven R. Swartz, president and CEO of Hearst Communications and Michael Golden, vice chairman of The New York Times Company (“AP Board of Directors”). AP remains a not-for-profit cooperative owned by 1500 American newspapers (“AP’s History”). Since the creation of the Pulitzer Prize, the AP has won fifty-one prizes for reporting and thirty-one photo Pulitzers (“About Us”). Charles J. Hanley, a former AP special correspondent, describes the

“unrivalled” reach of AP’s information now: “Today it flows through space, in bursts of bits and bytes relayed by satellite to newspapers, radio and television stations, computer screens across the nation and around the globe, a river of words and pictures that is *the greatest single source of news about the world for the world*” (171, emphasis added). As a global newsgathering agency, the AP has a national bureau in every state and eighty international bureaus through which to receive and disseminate information (“AP Bureaus”). From the outset, former AP President and CEO Louis Boccardi asserts, the AP continues to operate by the same simple rules: “Get it first, get it fast, get it right” (7). Not only is Drew’s image, as an AP photograph, framed by this reputation for prolific information gathering, this institutional framing also ensured that Drew’s photograph was disseminated globally. Even if the image did “disappear” from mainstream newspapers in the weeks after the attacks, it was initially circulated all over the world.

As another part of this institutional framework, journalism scholar Barbie Zelizer draws attention to the AP’s history of distributing photographs of people falling. In 1946, amateur photographer Arnold Hardy captured a woman falling from the windows of a burning hotel in Atlanta, Georgia (Figure 1.2). Zelizer writes that the AP later distributed the photograph as the “Winecoff Hotel Death”, even though the woman did not die (40). Like Drew, Hardy and his camera look up at the façade of the building as the person falls, her body white in contrast against the dark building. For this photograph, Hardy became the first amateur photographer to receive a Pulitzer Prize in 1947 (Zelizer 40-41). In 1975, *Boston Herald* photographer Stanley Forman’s photograph of a teenage girl and her two-year-old goddaughter falling from a burning apartment building after the fire escape collapsed was, again, distributed by the AP (Zelizer 41-42) (Figure 1.3). Later titled “Fire on Marlborough Street”, the older girl died on impact whilst her goddaughter survived (Zelizer 42). Stanley won the Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography in 1976 for his sequence of photographs

(Winslow). The AP has a history, then, of distributing Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs of people falling from burning buildings.

Zelizer includes these photographs, as well as photographs of people falling from the WTC, in her exploration of what she calls the “about-to-die image” which represents “a range of ambiguous, difficult, and contested public events ... shown by depicting individuals facing their impending death” (24). The about-to-die image also invites a “close consideration of the ‘as if’ of journalistic relay” (24). The “as if” or subjunctive quality of images, like its grammatical origin, “couches what is depicted in an interpretive schema of ‘what could be’ rather than ‘what is’”, inviting “impulses of implication, contingency, conditionality, play, imagination, emotionality, desire, supposal, hypothesis, hope, liminality, and (im)possibility to the supposed certainty of visual representation” (14). For instance, the “Winecoff Hotel Death” photograph plays with the idea of the about-to-die image: caught between life and death, in that moment she *might* die or she *might* live. Similarly, 9/11’s falling-body photographs do not depict the actual moment of death, but instead encourage imagination and supposition of what happened to those that jumped. The about-to-die image, Zelizer proposes, usually surfaces when events are particularly unsettled, ambiguous or complex (217). The open and conditional element to the photographs of falling bodies allows for “contingent, imagined, or impossible conclusions to already-finished sequences of events” (15). According to Zelizer’s argument, the “as if” of the about-to-die falling image “carries a picture beyond its denotive and connotative impulses to engage with other contexts, people, events, and pictures, and thereby take on meaning” (66). Considered in this way, even as a news image from an AP photographer, the self-proclaimed greatest source of factual information, Drew’s photograph encourages multiplicity and reflects the ongoing consequences of the attacks.

Drew has spent over forty-five years working for the AP, winning a Feature Photography Pulitzer Prize in 1993 as part of the team documenting the 1992 presidential campaign (Brennan and Clarage 213). Whilst Drew considers his photograph in an archive of AP images from various conflicts and Zelizer positions the photograph as an “about-to-die” image, I suggest we should also re-instate Drew’s falling-body photograph into his collection of images of the WTC. The AP online image archive documents almost 100 photographs taken by Drew on 11 September alone. His photographs of the WTC in total number 500 and counting from 1985 to 2016, of over 44,000 images attributed to Drew on the site. At the beginning of this archive, we see the towers in an aerial view, looming over lower Manhattan in early 1985, and in the background of a photograph of the Statue of Liberty completely obscured by scaffolding during a restoration. There are two photographs of wire-walker Philippe Petit walking on the railing atop the south tower during a break in news conferences in 1986. Next, there are a number of photographs of the February 1993 bombing of the WTC where Drew is evidently standing in the basement of the towers with officers from the Port Authority and the New York City Police Department, right next to the huge crater created as the bomb ripped through the building’s foundations. There are also some photographs from the following month as contractors work to repair and rebuild these foundations, with cranes pulling out debris and new steel beams added to secure the foundation. Closer to the attacks, in June 2001, Drew photographs Windows on the World chef Michael Lomonaco in the restaurant’s kitchen. Lomonaco would later appear in Singer’s documentary as part of the attempt to identify the person in Drew’s photograph. Newer additions to this small portion of Drew’s photographs include anniversaries of 9/11, the rebuilding of the site and the opening of the new One World Trade Center Observatory (“AP Images: Richard Drew”).

The significance of this archive for Drew’s falling-body photograph is that it suggests Drew’s familiarity with not only the site but, as in the cases of the 1993 bombing and the

2001 attacks, with the site's cycles of destruction and reconstruction. In other words, in his professional capacity, Drew had been here before. His photographs from the aftermath of the 1993 bombing are particularly striking: the police standing around a giant crater in the basement of the south tower caused by the bomb's detonation (Figure 1.4). The explosion was so powerful, according to reports, "it tore a 180-foot wide crater through four levels of the subterranean ... complex" beneath the towers (O'Shaughnessy and Mustain). The explosion also destroyed all power supply to the buildings, trapping hundreds of workers in stairwells and elevators (McFadden). *Times* reporter Robert McFadden wrote the next day that the bombing had plunged "the city's largest building complex into a maelstrom of smoke, darkness and fearful chaos". With the dust from broken concrete, the huge hole revealing the skeleton structure of the tower and workers trapped in the towers, there are unnerving visual parallels between the bombing and the attacks eight years later. As well as documenting the destruction in 1993 and 2001, Drew's archive also demonstrates the way the towers are repaired or rebuilt, and once again absorbed into the New York captured by the photojournalist on assignment. For example, in 1996 the repaired towers were the background for a photograph by Drew of Rebecca Lobo and Sheryl Swoopes, two Olympic gold-winning basketball players. Similarly, in June 2012, the under-construction One World Trade Center is, again, in the background of Drew's photograph of the Enterprise space shuttle as it is moved to the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space museum. Drew has captured the (attempted) destruction, reconstruction and re-entanglement of the WTC site into New York life. He has been taking photographs inside and around the WTC, and from a distance, for almost forty years ("AP Images: Richard Drew").

In *The Photograph: A Visual and Cultural History*, Graham Clarke writes that we not only "see" an image but "enter into a series of relationships" with the photograph, and we need to remember that the photograph is "the product of a *photographer*" through which

taking a photograph is an “active” process (29). The image also exists within a “wider body of reference and relates to a series of wider histories, at once aesthetic, cultural, and social” (29). Drew, as an AP photojournalist with extensive experience in photographing the body *in extremis* and the WTC site in its various forms, directly shapes the production and circulation of the photograph. In his endeavour to “read” the photograph, Clarke states, rather contradictorily, that the surface of a photograph is “flat and ‘sealed’ beneath its gloss coating”, presenting the image “as part of a sealed and continuous world, so that the context in which it was taken remains invisible and outside the frame of the image” (34). These comments stand in contrast to his description of the act of taking a photograph as processual, and dependent on the actions of a photographer. He continues:

A painting, in contrast, has a surface we can identify in terms of paint and brushstrokes. It always reflects the way it was made. Photography, as a medium, is deceptively invisible, leaving us with a seamless act of representation, an insistent thereness in which only the contents of the photograph, its message, are offered to the eye. (34).

Drew’s photograph, however, is not sealed beneath the smooth and symmetrical surface of the photograph and it *does* reflect how it was made. The photograph has its own brushstrokes, traces of the movement of its production and its framings. The very proximity of Drew’s body to the production of the photograph underlines the gestural, mediated nature of the image. In other words, Drew’s image has seams: visible reminders of its production and of its producer.

In *Frames of War*, Judith Butler writes that “[e]ven the most transparent documentary image is framed and framed for a purpose, carrying that purpose within its frame and implementing it through the frame” (70). As much as Drew claims that the photograph is almost pure document in his interview with the *Daily Beast*, captured by the camera without interference from the photographer, the image is still shaped by the institutional and corporeal framing provided by Drew as a photographer from the AP with experience of both

photographing death and the destruction of the WTC. His assignment for the AP at New York Fashion Week ensured that he was in Manhattan with a powerful digital camera. His experience of taking photographs in and around the WTC, and rookie photographs during the assassination of Robert Kennedy, ensured that he found the right angle to photograph the towers, and the people jumping. “The photograph”, Butler continues, “still interprets the reality it registers, and this dual function is preserved even when it is offered as ‘evidence’ for another interpretation presented in written or verbal form” (70). As I will now show in the case of Drew’s photograph, the institutional framing continues when the photograph is offered as evidence of the attacks in a national newspaper.

1.4 Journalism’s Falling-Body Image: N. R. Kleinfield and the *New York Times*

1.4.1 N. R. Kleinfield

N. R. Kleinfield started his career at the *New York Times* in 1977 as a writer for the paper’s business section after five years at the *Wall Street Journal* (“N. R. Kleinfield”). In 1997, Kleinfield and other *Times* reporters won a George Polk award for economics reporting for their 1996 series of articles exploring “The Downsizing of America” (Van Gelder).

Kleinfield’s article traced the acquisition of Chase Manhattan Bank by the Chemical Bank of New York. In 2001, just five months before the attacks, Kleinfield was part of the team of journalists who won the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for their series of articles documenting the influence of race on experiences and attitudes in America (“The Staff of *The New York Times*”). His contribution, “Guarding the Borders of the Hip-Hop Nation”, followed the stories of several young men through the commercialization of hip-hop music. Between these prize-winning pieces, Kleinfield produced two projects following year-long research. In June 1997, he wrote “With Round-the Clock Help, Young Man Joins the World”, an article following the journey of a severely disabled man from the Brooklyn Developmental

Center to his own apartment as he grew accustomed to the “rhythms of freedom”. In November 1999 came a piece documenting the exhausting and relentless internships of three junior doctors at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital Center. As well as the on-the-ground reporting reflected in Kleinfield’s article published in the 12 September issue, Kleinfield also has a history of long-form journalism, spending extended amounts of time investigating his stories.

In many of Kleinfield’s articles, two distinct concerns appear. Firstly, as a metro reporter, Kleinfield’s work is preoccupied with life in New York. Secondly, and related to this first concern, his writing often attempts to reflect the rhythms of the lives of the city’s residents, documenting the processes by which they experience life in the city. In an October 2015 article about a man called George Bell who had died alone in his apartment, for example, Kleinfield writes:

[D]eath even in such forlorn form can cause a surprising amount of activity, setting off *an elaborate, lurching process that involves a hodgepodge of interlocking characters* whose livelihoods flow in part or in whole from death ...

With George Bell, the *ripples* from the process would spill improbably and seemingly by happenstance from the shadows of Queens to upstate New York and Virginia and Florida. Dozens of people who never knew him, all cogs in the city’s complicated machinery of mortality, would find themselves settling the affairs of an ordinary man who left this world without anyone in particular noticing. (“The Lonely Death”, emphasis added).

Kleinfield details the identification of Bell’s body, the discovery of his will, the search for relatives and the auction of his belongings within the gradual piecing together of the man’s life. In a subsequent article detailing the motivation for this article, Kleinfield explains that he wanted to “follow whatever process” occurred to tie up the loose ends of such a death and then “to try to trace and understand that person’s life” (“What Happens?”). Using quotations from private investigators, legatees and Bell’s few friends, Kleinfield builds a piece that

attends to this large mesh of people and all the attendant parts in the process but also provides a highly personalised account of the life of “just another man” (“What Happens?”). Kleinfield tracks the “ripples” emanating from an event and how these ripples touch other people all over the country.

Like Drew’s athletic, learned movements, Kleinfield has also developed a style of writing that is agile in the way he is able to move between these various voices and moments, and follow an event as it ripples outward. This energy can be found in Kleinfield’s 12 September article. Kleinfield opens his account with the following lines:

It kept getting worse.

The horror arrived in episodic bursts of chilling disbelief, signified first by trembling floors, sharp eruptions, cracked windows. There was the actual unfathomable realization of a gaping, flaming hole in the first of the tall towers, and then the same thing all over again in its twin. There was the merciless sight of bodies helplessly tumbling out, some of them in flames.

Finally, the mighty towers themselves were reduced to nothing. Dense plumes of smoke raced through the downtown avenues, coursing between the buildings ...

People scrambled for their lives, but they didn’t know where to go. Should they go north, south, east, west? Stay outside, go indoors?

Here, Kleinfield encapsulates succinctly the “episodes” which made up that morning: the planes striking both towers, some of those trapped choosing to jump, the towers falling one after the other leaving only smoke and people fleeing the site. The photographic material on the front page of the *Times*, which accompanied these opening sentences, range from a woman covered in blood on the street to a group of firefighters in the smouldering wreckage and, largest of all, the two towers moments after the second plane struck. These photographs attest to the chaos and destruction through images of blood, fire and smoke. They are what Barbie Zelizer would call “as is” images that “undergird journalism’s truth claims to the real” (17-19). The photographs on the front cover of the *Times* speak to the “reality” of the event.

Kleinfield returns to each of these episodes (flames, falling bodies, falling towers and fleeing survivors) repeatedly throughout the continuation of the article on page seven of the issue. The difference, however, is that there is only one photograph: Drew's falling-body photograph (Figure 0.2).¹⁵ The image takes up roughly a quarter of the page, with the caption "[a] person falls headfirst after jumping from the north tower of the World Trade Center. It was a horrific sight that was repeated in the moments after the planes struck the towers". The contrast between Drew's image and those on the front page is clear: smoke, blood and any obvious signs of destruction are absent. Unlike the photographs on the front cover, there is no sign that "the planes struck the towers". Nonetheless, page seven of the newspaper frames the photograph with Kleinfield's first-person experience of the chaos of the event. As suggested by the "episodic" bursts of the opening paragraph on the front page, the continuation of the article that surrounds Drew's photograph is notable for its constant movement. The writing relentlessly moves up and down: pigeons in the street fly up; the "concussion" from the first plane moves up the building; bodies fall out of the windows; a woman jumps with her dress billowing out; another rides to the floor 90 of the north tower before the attacks; rubble falls; three men begin their "descent" from the floor 52 of the same tower and more people are seen jumping. Even two WTC workers who "blessed their luck at being late for work" are still identified by the fact that they worked on the higher floors of the towers: "She worked on the 99th floor ... He worked on the 80th floor". Then the south tower collapses, before sending up a "plume of smoke reminiscent of an atomic bomb" which then descends to street level, before the north tower falls and releases "[a]nother giant cloud".

The horizontal plane is just as frantic: dense plumes of smoke race along the street; bystanders tried to "flee the very epicentre"; people in the street "panicked and ran";

¹⁵ According to Zelizer, Drew's photograph also appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on 12 September and in the *Washington Post* the following day (45).

emergency vehicles “sped downtown”; one woman ran uptown, others outran the smoke when the south tower fell and, when the north tower is about to fall, Kleinfield writes “[a]gain, people ran”. Kleinfield’s writing only takes a breath at the end, when both towers are gone, and onlookers and rescue workers witness the ruins in the “intense orange glow” of smoke and fire. The final words of the article are left to Monet Harris, a transit worker, who muses “[y]ou always look for those two buildings. You always know where you are when you see those two buildings. And now they’re gone”. Intermittently throughout the article, Kleinfield includes quotations from witnesses about the falling bodies: “[w]e saw bodies flying out of the windows”; “[t]hey were standing up there and they jumped. One woman, her dress billowing out”; “[w]e started to see people jumping from the top of the World Trade Center”; “I saw two people jump out”. By placing these comments intermittently throughout the article, Kleinfield creates endless lines of motion, especially falling, that surround the still photograph with the movements of people falling, running, descending the stairs and, amidst them all, Kleinfield’s movements as he navigated the chaos.

Literary theorist Werner Wolf describes this type of frame as a “framing border” in the same vein as dramatic prologues, film trailers and “picture frames or their substitutes” (25). These framing borders, according to Wolf, “frequently not only mark the inside/outside border between artefact and context” but also “help to interpret an artefact by creating a ‘bridge’ between its inside and its outside or context” (30). Although I do not define framing as the barrier between inside and outside, Wolf’s description of the flexibility between framed and frame is particularly helpful with regards to Kleinfield’s article. Wolf’s “bridge” recalls Patricia Allmer’s description of the frame as a binding rather than a boundary, creating an “interdependency between inside and outside” to the point where “outside” the frame there are only further frames (114, 130). As a framing narrative for the falling-body image, Kleinfield’s writing exposes the moment of the photograph’s creation in movement by

entangling the image in the frenetic movements of victims, towers, witnesses, survivors and, crucially, journalists. Kleinfield's article reminds the reader that the falling bodies were not still, and neither were Kleinfield or Drew, by binding the photograph to other moving bodies.

1.4.2 The Falling-Body Image in the "Newspaper of Record"

In his exploration of the news photograph, Roland Barthes writes that it is a message formed by a "source of emission": the "staff of the newspaper, the group of technicians certain of whom take the photo, some of whom choose, compose, and treat it, while others ... give it a title, a caption, and a commentary" ("Message" 194). The press photograph is also formed by a "point of reception", or the "public which reads the paper", and by a "channel of transmission": the newspaper itself, "or, more precisely, a complex of concurrent messages with the photograph as center and surrounds constituted by the text, the title, the caption, the layout and, in a more abstract but no less 'informative' way, by the very name of the paper" ("Message" 194). He continues that although a news photograph is not "simply a product or channel", it is also not an "isolated structure" but actually communicates with other structures in a newspaper: "the text – title, caption, or article – accompanying every press photograph" ("Message" 195). Barthes' observations about the intricate mesh of processes and messages surrounding the selection of photographs for a news story, and the subsequent framing and circulation in the newspaper, highlights the significance of Kleinfield's *Times* article as one of the first narrative framings of Drew's photograph *before* Junod's *Esquire* article in September 2003.

"[T]he very name of the newspaper", Barthes continues, "can heavily orientate the reading of the message" (194). The *New York Times* is one of the most widely circulated newspapers in America. Each issue has the *Times*' famous leitmotif, "All the news that's fit to print", inscribed on the front cover (Campbell). In 2011, writer and critic of the *Times* Kurt

Andersen observed that the *Times* is the “great position of authority”: “In the secular church of establishment opinion and press, the *New York Times* is where the encyclicals come and where life is organized and ruled” (Novak and Rossi 6). In the introduction to their criticism of the *Times*’ coverage of the Iraq War, Howard Friel and Richard Falk write that the *Times* was not “more at fault than other influential media outlets” but it became the focus of their attention because “*it occupies such an exalted place* in the political and moral imagination of influential Americans and others as *the most authoritative source of information*” (2, emphasis added). This lofty status, they write, has designated the *Times* as “the newspaper of record in the United States”: “a trusted media source that supposedly is dedicated to truthfulness and objectivity, regardless of political consequences” (2). In her analysis of the *Times*’ use of gender stereotyping during the 2008 presidential election, Lindsey Meeks puts the newspaper’s status succinctly when she writes:

The *New York Times* has won more Pulitzer Prizes than any other news outlet ... It paints the pictures that become what scholars call collective memory. The words and images in the *Times* do much to define U.S. culture at any moment. These memories chronicle both national triumph and heartbreak ... How people come to the content may vary these days, but people keep coming to the *Times* because *it is a history-defining institution*. (520-21, emphasis added).

Although these two works document the failings of the newspaper, the representation of the *Times* as an authoritative news institution remains. The *Times* is still considered an essential part of the process of recording history, as can be seen throughout this thesis where not only does the newspaper document many of the events and performances that I reference, but also offers digital access to its entire archive.

What does it mean, then, for Drew’s image to be in the *Times*? Most obviously, in terms of circulation, the photograph was being seen by relatively large numbers of people. In the wake of the attacks, people turned to the *Times*. Daily circulation rose 3.8 percent to 1,194,000, the highest figure in almost a decade. Contrastingly, the circulation of America’s

best-selling newspaper, *USA Today*, dropped 3.4 percent to 2,211,000. A spokesperson for *USA Today* commented that this decline could be attributed to a decrease in business travel following the attacks since approximately forty percent of their newspapers are delivered in bulk to hotels and airlines. Both the *Washington Post* and *Chicago Tribune* reported a more moderate increase in circulation of 0.7 percent to 812,000 and 628,000, respectively (Barringer). On 12 September 2001, the falling-body image was seen by potentially over one million people in the *Times* alone. Being in the “newspaper of record”, Drew’s image thus became part of the perceived official record of that day. Junod writes that after going “all around the world” the photograph “disappeared, as if we willed it away” (“The Falling Man”) but it is still an indelible part of the public record even if it was not published in the mainstream media for two years.

The *Times*, like the AP, is a recognizable institution with a long and illustrious history of documenting key events. In 2013, Jill Abramson, then executive editor of the *Times*, stated that the newspaper offered

deeply reported stories that show readers – not only tell them on the reporter’s authority – but show them how something transpired ... There’s so little of that in the journalism profession that ... we very smartly exploit the fact that we still have plenty of reporters *on the ground* actually gathering reporting and information, and vividly bringing the news to people. (Emphasis added).

Although there is a sense of bias here, Abramson’s comments at least reveal how the *Times* views itself, and potentially how its readers view the *Times* and its content. Kleinfield, his three notebooks in hand as he interviewed numerous people at the site, is a perfect example of the reporter “on the ground” collecting information. In a similar fashion to the AP, the *Times* prides itself on gathering and disseminating first-hand information. Even though Kleinfield had no part in choosing Drew’s photograph to accompany his article, the falling-body image is implicated in the impetus from both institutions for direct, raw experience to be relayed to bureaus, newsrooms and readers. As the direct result of the dust on Drew’s

camera and the ash on Kleinfield's notebooks, the photograph is produced, widely circulated and framed by their experiences.

Like Drew, Kleinfield also reported the 1993 bombing of the north tower. Eight and a half years later, Kleinfield expected a "disaster of limited scope", recalling that he had "covered the prior bombing in the Trade Center parking garage" and, even knowing that "this was more significant, with planes embedded in each tower", it "never occurred" to him that the buildings were in danger of collapsing (qtd. in email). In his recollection of the 1993 incident, Kleinfield views his expectations of the 2001 disaster through his memory of the bombing. His 1993 article is, too, eerie in light of what happened subsequently. He writes: "No one was sure what had happened; did a plane hit the building, was it an earthquake, had lightning struck?" He then describes how "thousands of people in the World Trade Center knew they were in the grip of one of the most dreaded urban nightmares: *they were in the city's tallest building and something was very wrong*" ("Explosion", emphasis added). These statements would not look out of place in Kleinfield's 2001 article, with the strange premonition of planes striking the building and his description of thousands of people caught in an "urban nightmare" of tall buildings and explosions. Similarly, Kleinfield's episodic writing style finds its roots in the 1993 article which begins:

It depended on where you were in the towers when it came. For some the warning was a trembling underfoot or just a black computer screen and flickering lights. For others, it was a shocking noise. One woman was blown out of her high heels. Another, desk chair and all, sank into the floor. And then, instantly it seemed, came the billowing smoke and the chilling realization that you had to get out of there.

In 2001, "trembling floors, sharp eruptions, cracked windows", had given way to "the gaping flaming hole", and then to bodies tumbling out of the windows, before the towers collapsed themselves. In 1993, the floor also trembled, followed by other visual and aural warnings of disaster, the "billowing smoke" a precursor to the "dense plumes of smoke" Kleinfield describes in 2001. The woman "blown out of her high heels" finds a parallel with the woman

jumping from the tower, her dress “billowing out”. In both articles, Kleinfeld uses small but powerful episodes of action to follow the ripples of the unfolding event.

In 1993, however, being “low” in the building was “the worst place to be” as it was nearest the impact zone in the garage, whereas in 2001, anyone above the impact zones was unreachable. This attention to height is reflected in the relentless movement of the 1993 narrative with Kleinfeld utilising the same anecdotal style which permeated the article in 2001. Demonstrating his “on the ground” reporting style as well, he describes individual moments of ascent and descent: “Joann Hilton was low”; “Denise Bosco was high ... instinct said to run ... she sped for the stairwells and began the seemingly endless descent”; “Two pregnant women inched their way down”; “I kept going and going ... never sure how many more flights I would make”; “[a] pregnant woman was plucked off the roof of 2 World Trade Center by a police helicopter”. Finally, he recounts Rachel Vidal’s descent from her office on floor 103:

As she threaded her way down the stairs, she began to feel much older than her 43 years. “About the 40th floor, my knees started to give in,” she said. “I didn’t think I was going to make it. But my co-workers kept egging me on. Let’s keep going, they’d say. We only have 40 floors to go. We only have 30. We only have 20. So I kept going, and I’m not sure my knees will ever forgive me”.

As in “A Creeping Horror”, there is a restless pace to the writing as Kleinfeld’s words race up and down the towers. Our lasting impression of the 1993 bombing from Kleinfeld’s article is a survivor making her way out of the tower. In 2001, of course, he ends the article with the complete destruction of the towers themselves with only emptiness above the second story, let alone forty floors of stairs.

In a similar way to Drew’s ever-expanding archive of WTC photographs, in all stages of destruction and reconstruction, Kleinfeld returns to the WTC after the initial disaster coverage in 1993 and 2001. In February 1994, a year after the bombing, Kleinfeld re-interviewed Joann Hilton, who had been “low” in the building and therefore in the most

danger. Although her destroyed basement office was never rebuilt, Joann “returned to makeshift quarters in the trade center just four days after the blast”. “Her life”, Kleinfield writes, “clattered back to form”, even though she still experienced some physical and psychological consequences of the bombing. In September 2002, Kleinfield recounts the story of two paramedics who “stood idly on 911 duty” during the attacks. With most victims out of reach or beyond treatment, medical teams had very few people to help. In the year since, however, these paramedics had been “out there now and every day saving lives, and just as much participating in their own regeneration from embedded memories of a year of monsters”. What Kleinfield’s continuing relationship with the WTC, as well as Drew’s photographs of the site, shows is the enmeshment of the terrorist attacks in 2001 in a wider history of the destruction and regeneration of the site, and the people affected. The work of Drew and Kleinfield frames the falling-body image within these cycles of change at the site, implicating the image within wider histories of movement both spatial and institutional.

1.5 Ambulatory Knowing in Manhattan: Drew, Kleinfield and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

“Walking is the best way to explore and exploit the city”, writes Iain Sinclair as he documents his walks through London, “[w]alking, moving across a retreating townscape, stitches it all together: the illicit cocktail of bodily exhaustion and a raging carbon monoxide high” (qtd. in Pile, “Memory” 116). Considered the “pre-eminent spatial practice for experiencing the city”, walking has frequently been understood as a way to navigate the complex, multitudinous and protean city (Pile *Real Cities* 4). Most famously, Michel de Certeau proclaimed that the “ordinary practitioners of the city” exist on the streets below the city’s tall buildings (93). These “walkers” follow and write an “urban ‘text’”, their paths entwining and intersecting, creating a moving, messy mesh (93). In his analysis of Sinclair’s

walking narratives, Steve Pile writes that as Sinclair “threads his way through these aspects of a covert life in London, [he] gradually stitches these apparently unconnected stories together into a surreal (more-real) urban scene” (“Memory” 117). Pile concludes from his analysis of Sinclair’s work that “there is a dense weave to the fabric of the city and the mind, in which the warp and weft of the pattern cross over and under one another” (“Memory” 124). In the language of this thesis, then, walking the city both creates and pursues the entangled lines of the meshwork.

Having examined the significance of the professional framings of the AP, the *Times*, and the careers of Drew and Kleinfield, this chapter will now turn to discussing their journeys together on that day. To this end, I propose that Drew and Kleinfield enact an “ambulatory knowing” in their work (Ingold, “Footprints” 122). As coined by anthropologist Tim Ingold, “ambulatory knowing” refers to the knowledge “grown along the myriad paths we take as we make our ways through the world in the course of everyday activities, rather than assembled from information obtained from numerous fixed locations” (“Footprints” 121). In this way, it is very much related to the topology of the meshwork rather than the network. Although documenting terrorist attacks on this scale can hardly be called “everyday activities”, Drew and Kleinfield were, after all, doing their day jobs by responding to what happened. Although their days were disrupted by the extraordinary, they responded by performing their “everyday activities” of photographing and reporting, activities they had also performed eight years before in the aftermath of the WTC bombing in 1993, and many times elsewhere in their respective forty-year careers. I have suggested that Drew and Kleinfield produce and frame the falling-body photograph in movement through their everyday practices “on the ground”, learned through experience, and through the institutional framings of the AP and the *Times*, which ensured both wide circulation and a distinct sense of authority to accompany the image into the world. Here, I will lay greater emphasis on the fact that they walked around the site.

In a later work, Ingold explains ambulatory knowing in further detail by suggesting that it is a sort of knowledge grown through movement:

For the walker, movement is not ancillary to knowing – not merely a means of getting from point to point in order to collect the raw data of sensation for subsequent modelling in the mind. Rather, moving *is* knowing. *The walker knows as he goes along* ... [T]he walker draws a tale from impressions on the ground ... Less a surveyor than a narrator, his aim is ... to situate each impression in relation to the occurrences that paved the way for it, presently concur with it, and follow along after. In this sense his knowledge is not classificatory but storied, not totalising and synoptic but open-ended and exploratory. (*Life* 47-8).

Both Drew and Kleinfield were moving around the WTC on foot after the planes collided with the towers, as the towers collapsed and in the aftermath. Ingold's description underlines the primacy of movement in the accumulation of open and experiential knowledge. I suggest that it is only by "*walking along*" that Drew was able to take the photograph and Kleinfield was able to furnish the image with its framing narrative (Ingold, "Footprints" 121). Both the photograph and the accompanying article in the *Times* are products of knowledge that emphasise the event as "storied" and "open-ended". The photographer and journalist walk and create the lines of the meshwork in which the photograph becomes imbricated. Sarah Pink details this concept thoroughly by stating that images are not "'of' places or things" but are rather "*in* places" and produced "by moving *through* and not over or on environments, and they are ... outcomes of and in movement" ("Sensory" 9). Furthermore, in her work on ethnographic research and first-person perspective video recordings, Pink writes that "the camera records in part a trace through the world that is made not simply of what is in front of the camera but that is forged as the holder of the camera makes their way *through* and *in* the world" ("Going Forward" 246). Elsewhere, she asserts that "walking with video" is a process of "*going forward through*", offering "a very particular way of creating a permanent trace of the routes we take through both the ground and the air" ("Drawing" 146).

By way of demonstrating the significance of walking or moving through the city for the production and consumption of the falling-body image, I turn to a prominent 9/11 novel, Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, hoping to offer a fresh perspective.¹⁶ After his father, Thomas, dies in the attacks, nine-year-old Oskar Schell finds a key in an envelope in a blue vase in his father's closet, with the word "Black" on the envelope. Oskar decides to find the lock that fits the key by visiting everyone with the surname Black in Manhattan in order to not only solve this mystery but, by extension, to also piece together exactly how his father died. Oskar has a screenshot of a person jumping from the WTC in his notebook titled "Stuff That Happened to Me" from a Portuguese video site (59, 256). After examining the photograph "extremely closely", he thinks the figure might be his father: "[t]here's one body that could be him. It's dressed like he was, and when I magnify it until the pixels are so big that it stops looking like a person, sometimes I can see glasses. Or I think I can. But I know I probably can't. It's just me wanting it to be him ... There were so many different ways to die, and I just need to know which was his" (257). The image reproduced in the novel several times is, according to the title page, "a photo illustration based on a photograph by Lyle Owerko" (Figure 0.8). Once Oscar discovers that the key belongs to William Black for a safety deposit box that William's father had left in the blue vase, which had been bought at an auction by Thomas, Oskar wishes that he had never found the lock: "[I]looking for it let me stay close to him [Thomas] for a little while longer" (304). Oskar's quest across Manhattan and the photograph of the falling person are, then, intimately intertwined.

Oskar's quest also relates to a game he used to play with his father called "Reconnaissance Expedition" in which Thomas would set his son tasks, such as finding

¹⁶ For critical assessments of the novel's experimentation with form, see Anker 465, Gray 52-3 and Greenwald Smith 157-9.

something from every decade of the twentieth century (8). For the final expedition before his death, Thomas gives Oskar a map of Central Park without any clues. After seeing his father use a fork rather than chopsticks to eat his Chinese food, Oskar walks all over Central Park with his metal detector and brings back his findings. His father, reading the *New York Times*, does not tell Oskar if he had found the object of the mission, but Oskar sees that he has circled in the paper the words “not stop looking”, and so continues to go back to the park until his father dies (9-10).¹⁷ Central Park is also the last remaining vestige of Manhattan’s “Sixth Borough”, a story that Thomas tells Oskar the night before he died of an imaginary island separated from Manhattan by a thin waterway, but which eventually starts to float away “[a] millimeter at a time” (219). With large hooks, according to the story, “the park was pulled by the people of New York, like a rug across a floor, from the Sixth Borough into Manhattan”, and children slept in the park as it was moved, creating “a mosaic of their dreams” (221). Oskar makes reference to this exchange between father and son several times throughout the novel. After we see the photo illustration of the falling figure for the first time, there is a photograph of Manhattan with Central Park cut out (Figure 1.5), followed by a cropped and magnified version of the falling-body photograph (Figure 1.6). It is almost as if the magnified image could fit in to the white, vertical space left by the park, replacing the metal objects with the falling body as the source of Oskar’s “Reconnaissance Expedition”.

Karolina Golimowska has explored the importance of walking in navigating and reclaiming the changed city in certain 9/11 novels, including *Extremely Loud*. Golimowska writes that Oskar “seeks solace in the city through movement” (10), connecting the way he walks “in extremely precise lines” looking for objects in Central Park with the hours of

¹⁷ The article Thomas is reading is about the disappearance of Chandra Levy in May 2001, and Thomas circles the following quote from Chandra’s father: “We will *not stop looking* until we are given a definitive reason to stop looking, namely, Chandra’s return” (10, emphasis added).

walking all over Manhattan looking for a lock to fit the key (*Extremely Loud* 8, 87). “By walking along through different boroughs”, she continues,

Oskar learns to understand the city and with each step or newly acquitted neighbourhood, tries to get closer to his father ... In this exhausting process achieved by small steps he also gets closer to himself. Out of the fragments of the city, he develops a personal map of the space his father used to live in ... the process of mapping the city constantly overlaps with Oskar’s own life mapping and the process of identity formation. These two developments are intertwined ... New York becomes a labyrinth of stores and places to discover in order for Oskar to understand what has happened. (8-9).

Oskar enacts ambulatory knowing: he knows as he goes, walking his way towards a knowledge that is storied and open, towards acknowledging what happened to his father on that day. With, as I suggest, the falling-body photograph intertwined in Oskar’s quest to find the lock, Oskar traces the lines of his journeys through the city all over the falling-body photograph as a means of feeling closer to his father and moving himself closer to the event as well. By moving through New York, knitting together “the warp and the weft” of the city and his mind, Oskar and the photograph become entangled in the city in his desire for understanding (Pile, “Memory” 124).

Understanding the image of the falling body in *Extremely Loud* as consumed by Oskar in movement (and produced by Owerko in movement), allows us to view the novel’s final visual sequence as the product of movement as well. This sequence is a flipbook of Owerko’s falling-body image placed in reverse so that the figure in the photograph “falls up” towards the tower. In his review for the *New York Times*, Walter Kirn labelled the flipbook as one of many moments in the novel that he considered trite and “mock-profound”. Similarly, Michiko Kakutani writes that the falling-body images in the novel are just one of many “razzle-dazzle narrative techniques” that are whimsical rather than persuasive. In a particularly scathing review of book and author entitled “A Bag of Tired Tricks”, B. R. Myers labels the sequence “poor taste”, and asserts that a substantial part of the novel is

“designed to be only glanced at”. These reviews intimate that the inclusion of the falling-body image in the novel is one of many superficial constructs failing to disguise the hollowness of the narrative. By highlighting the primacy of movement in the production and consumption of images, however, the flipbook sequence is perhaps better understood as demonstrative of the way Oskar has moved *through* the city, inventing his own narrative around the photograph and his father’s fate as the result of his ambulatory knowing. As Christopher Vanderwees observes, Foer does not include page numbers on the pages of the flipbook, thus Oskar’s alternative narrative of the flying man can easily be undone by the reader by flipping from the back of the novel. “In a sense”, Vanderwees writes, “there is no beginning or end to the flipbook, only the suggestion of a continuous cycle of floating and falling, forwards and backwards” (“Photographs” 188). The need to “flip” through the sequence, to move through it, is the culmination of Oskar’s journey, and exposes the movement inherent in taking and consuming the falling-body photograph. Like Oskar, the reader must move with the image as well, inventing their own narratives of movement as they flip forwards and backwards. The book, in turn, becomes part of the animated meshwork of falling-body images, temporarily fixing the image whilst drawing attention to the fact that the image cannot be fixed forever, but is produced, and must be experienced, in movement.

Ingold differentiates between two “modalities of movement”: wayfaring and transport (“Footprints” 126). The wayfarer, Ingold suggests, “negotiates or improvises a passage as he goes *along* ... his concern is to seek a way through: not to reach a specific destination or terminus but to keep on going ... wherever he is, and so long as life goes on, there is somewhere further he can go. Along the way, events take place, observations are made, and life unfolds” (“Footprints” 126). The wayfarer is “always somewhere, yet every ‘somewhere’ is on the way to somewhere else” along the lines of the meshwork (*Lines* 81-84).

Contrastingly, transport “carries the passenger *across* a pre-prepared, planar surface”

(“Footprints” 126). This kind of movement is a “lateral displacement”, as opposed to the “lineal progression” of wayfaring, connecting “a point of embarkation with a terminus” (“Footprints” 127). “[T]he lines of transport”, Ingold explains, “form a network of point-to-point connections” (*Lines* 84). The wayfarer is the walker who enacts an ambulatory knowing, moving and growing along paths and trails. On their way to the WTC, of course, Drew and Kleinfield qualify as “passengers” in that they arrived by subway train and taxi, respectively, with a clear location in mind and the obvious need for expediency. Oskar, too, eventually begins to use other modes of transport to move across the city. But, as Ingold suggests, “[i]n practice ... pure transport is an ideal” (“Footprints” 127). On the morning of 11 September, the WTC was not a predetermined destination for Drew and Kleinfield. Like Oskar, both journalists responded to the unfolding events of their respective journeys, by travelling and walking around the city, and creating the lines of a meshwork that would eventually entangle in the falling-body photograph.

As geographer Doreen Massey writes of a train journey from London to Milton Keynes, “you are not just travelling *through* space or across it, you are altering it a little ... Arriving in a new place means joining up with, somehow linking into, the collection of interwoven stories of which that place is made” (118-19). The person travelling by train or any other mode of transport can still perform the activity of the wayfarer, attending to the way that the environment is moving and changing. “Time passes and life goes on, even while the passenger is in transit”, Ingold asserts (*Lines* 188). Massey similarly describes how the London from which the train has departed “has already moved on”: “[l]ives have pushed ahead”, the train is “speeding across on-going stories” (118-19). As Drew and Kleinfield speed towards the towers, they are moving across and with the transforming landscape and the intersecting journeys of all the witnesses around them. In fact, Drew and Kleinfield pick up threads they had left behind in 1993, “linking up again with trajectories” that they

encountered last time they covered a disaster at the WTC (Massey 119). Both journalists, performing “on the ground” work, perceived this ground “kinaesthetically”, feeling the changing contours in their own bodies and then reflecting this movement in their work (Ingold, *Lines* 125). Drew’s falling-body image is the product of these interconnecting movements.

Undoubtedly, Tom Junod’s *Esquire* article “The Falling Man” is a key reason behind the continued fascination with the photograph and its recurrence throughout print and digital media. Junod’s challenge that the photograph must be reckoned with has provoked a multitude of responses. What this chapter has attempted to achieve, however, is to present an alternative, in-depth journalistic history of the photograph *before* Junod to demonstrate the circumstances in which the photograph was initially produced. That Richard Drew is an AP photographer and N. R. Kleinfield a *Times* reporter are important factors in the account of an image that goes on to emerge in unsanctioned digital environments. According to Pink, the still photograph can also be considered “a complex coming together of humans and technologies in movement”: “created through movement, they stand for movement and they are viewed in movement” (“Sensory” 9). Using this ethnographic approach, I have suggested that as Drew makes his way through the chaos of the WTC on 11 September 2001, taking photographs, Kleinfield also manoeuvres through this same landscape, collecting the words and impressions that would furnish one of the first narrative frames of the falling-body image. Produced in movement, the image is consumed and then reproduced in movement too (Pink, “Sensory” 12).

Tied to this sense of movement, however, is the specificity of the WTC as place I have articulated through the work of Ingold, Pink and Massey, and the significance of the site for the ongoing production and consumption of the falling-body photograph. Whilst other studies have gestured towards the production and circulation contexts provided by Drew and

the *New York Times*, I have attended to the particularities of these framing narratives with much greater attention. It is important to consider the details of Drew taking the photograph and Kleinfield taking his notes, as well as their institutional and career framings, to understand the falling-body image as a constitutive element in the production of space at the WTC and in order to establish lines of relation to further understandings of “place” which I explore in later chapters. We have followed the route through which Drew took his photograph and Kleinfield drafted its first narrative frame, but where do we go from here? As Pink details in her exploration of walking with video, the trace of the route left by the video “invites the viewer to go forward with the video subjects – and the cameraperson – as they draw with their feet ... there is a sense of being pulled or *drawn to* the route” (“Drawing” 148). Similarly, Massey writes that “you can never simply ‘go back’” because the place will have changed; you can “trace backwards on a page/map” but not “in space-time” (124-25). When we show images, Pink proposes, “this does not involve taking people ‘back’ ... but entails a process of movement *forward*” with the image (“Sensory” 8). If we follow the movements of the meshwork, we are *drawn* along the lines themselves. We must, therefore, follow the falling-body image to where it next appears.

2. A Digital Access to Intimacy and the Long Afterlife of the World Trade Center

“Jumpers”

2.1 The Falling Body Remixed and Recirculated

In *Watching the World Change: The Stories Behind the Images of 9/11*, David Friend traces the stories of fifty photographs taken on 11 September 2001. One of these images, taken by Jeff Christensen, features the highest floors of the north tower above the site of impact of American Airlines Flight 11 (Figure 2.1). Christensen, then a Reuters photographer, took several pictures capturing WTC office workers leaning out of broken windows. According to Christensen, this particular photograph was taken fifteen minutes after the south tower had fallen, and fifteen minutes before the north tower would collapse (qtd. in Friend 76). Friend recounts the story of Mike Rambousek, whose son Luke died during the attacks. Friend writes that Rambousek, after seeing Christensen’s photograph, came to believe that one of the figures was his son:

[H]e came across an image on the Internet. In silence, he clicks his mouse and calls up the picture on his computer ... Though Rambousek has no idea how his son met his end that day, he has this remnant. The picture seems blurry, Rambousek having used Photoshop software to enlarge the image to its grainy limit. He holds up a digital print and points to a smudge in one of the precarious perches. It shows a man with Luke’s dark-brown hair, stocky frame, bare upper torso ... Mike Rambousek, staring at the same image, says he has never received even a trace of his son’s remains. “*This is the closest place to him.*” (75-8).

Figure 2.2 is an enlargement of the photograph from an excerpt of Friend’s book in *Vanity Fair* with “Luke” circled. For Rambousek, the blurred and pixelated photograph provides comfort, a space in which to feel close to his son in lieu of actual remains. It is a textured, tactile and intimate space that allows responses and encourages interventions completely beyond the control of Christensen, Reuters and mainstream media outlets. As well as being published in newspapers, the photograph was also downloaded and enlarged through Photoshop by Rambousek, and then printed again.

Rambousek did not just find, magnify and print Christensen's photograph but he also created a DVD montage that includes photographs of Luke and people falling:

Up springs a music video, edited by Mike himself ... Pictures skitter along ... News photos begin to barrel across the monitor. The plane attacks, smoke spills out, bodies plummet. Each frame, plucked from the Web, is pin-sharp, hi-res, technicolor. Tugged taut against an electronic backbeat, one picture pulses up for one to three seconds, then twirls into the next ... The refrain weaves in mournfully, in counterpoint ... And then, interlaced, come subliminal faces in split-second flashes: Osama bin Laden ... Mohamed Atta ... Lukas Rambousek ... Once he takes it all, digitizes it, paces it, makes it his own, he emerges, empowered, at the other end. (Friend 78-80).

Rambousek searches the Internet for photographs of the attacks to show how it "*really* was" beyond the idealized memories where "[e]verything's clean, [everything's] flags" (qtd. in Friend 79). In his audio-visual digital collage, Rambousek interacts with the photographs of the burning towers, of bodies falling, and also photographs of bin Laden and Atta, mastermind behind the attacks and hijacker of Flight 11, as well as images of his son. Far beyond a dichotomising narrative of "Us" versus "Them", Rambousek makes these images "his own", weaving music through photographs of victims and perpetrators, and re-contextualising them within an entirely personal narrative. These enmeshed images empower Rambousek, and help him to come to terms with what *really* happened. The Internet, as a source for many of these photographs, becomes a place through which images are pulled together and interwoven to form new narratives.

In the introduction and chapter one, I outlined a conception of place inspired by the work of Doreen Massey, Tim Ingold and Sarah Pink that emphasises movement and the activation of potential relations in the ongoing creation of place, rather than place as something contained and static. "Geography", argues Massey, "will not be simply territorial ... If we really think of space relationally, then it is the sum of all our connections, and in that sense utterly grounded" (184-85). Pink develops this idea of place in relation to the Internet to complicate the idea that the Internet is a virtual realm separate to the "offline" world

(“Visual” 119). For Pink, Massey’s “constellation of processes” and Ingold’s “meshwork” of lines enable us to think about how things, such as online and offline material, “are interwoven or entangled with each other”, rather than how they are separate but connected (“Visual” 120). In *Virtual Ethnography* (2000), Christine Hine is also concerned with connection in virtual space. She writes that “[t]he web does have a form of spatiality ... defined by connection” (106). Her ethnographic method diverges from “the traditional emphasis ... on field sites which map on to physically bounded places” (58). With growing connectivity in the world, and cultures appearing to be “interlinked ... and connected through physical mobility of people and things”, Hine proposes that her own approach for analyzing the Internet focuses “on connectivity rather than holism” (58-60). Internet- and computer-based practices, then, become ways of navigating and creating an online spatiality.

Similarly, in a later work, *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* (2015), Hine does not conceive of the Internet “as a singular object contained within one site” since “Internet content ... may acquire quite different meanings and identities in different settings of use” (62). Furthermore, notions of moving between online and offline sites emphasizes the significance of “connection and circulation between them” rather than confining the object of study to single sites (64). These developments lead Hine to consider the ethnographic field as actually created through the following of connections whilst “reflecting on the circumstances and actors that bring these connections into being” (68-69). Pink, too, furthers the approach to the Internet as a site of connectivity and relatedness by suggesting that online places are unbounded, inviting us to understand the Internet “as a field of potential forms of relatedness” whereby “relationships between different elements of the Internet might not necessarily be activated”, but “they always have the potential to be interwoven into particular intensities of place that also involve persons, interactivity, material localities and technologies” (“Visual” 120). In a similar way to my

method of a meshwork of framing narratives, the ethnographic approach to the Internet focuses on both the specific instances where these lines of relation coalesce into a sense of place *and* how these lines continue to spiral outwards.

Although this thesis is not an ethnographic study, the work of Pink and Hine encourages a view of Internet- or computer-based interventions into the falling-body image as part of an experiential and entangled mesh of responses in which a wide variety of photographs, web users and technologies have the potential to connect. The Internet can be considered an environment through which we can move forward with the image, following the lines of the meshwork of falling-body images. It is a place that brings and binds together potentially contradictory responses to the image, from remembrance to playfulness, in the continuing journey of the photograph and unfolding of the event. The Internet allows for Rambousek's "digital access to intimacy": a way of using digital photographs, the Internet and video editing software to manoeuvre through his loss (Schotzko 52). T. Nikki Cesare Schotzko uses this phrase, "digital access to intimacy", to describe the process by which artist Carolee Schneemann scanned newspaper photographs of falling bodies into her computer. Schneemann's "computer-based methodology" led to two works based on these photographs: *Terminal Velocity* (2001) and *Dark Pond* (2001-2005) (Figures 2.3 and 2.4) (Schotzko 52). In a similar fashion to Rambousek's twofold memorialisation process, the former piece gradually enlarges the photographs of falling bodies, like the grainy magnification of Christensen's photograph. In the latter, Schneemann paints over the scanned images, weaving colour and shapes through the black and white photographs as Rambousek weaves music and personal snapshots of his son through news photographs of the towers and the perpetrators. Although Rambousek and Schneemann have different motivations for their work, their processes of enlargement and re-appropriation unite them in this "digital access to intimacy". Digital tools, such as the Internet and editing software, provide those intervening in the

falling-body image with a way to situate their own bodies in relation to the image, creating further diverse framing narratives.

The word “intimacy” originates from the Latin *intimare* meaning both as an adjective: “inmost, deepest, profound or close in friendship” and as a verb: “to put or bring into, drive or press into, to make known” (OED). The digital access to intimacy, then, engenders a sense of familiarity with the falling-body photograph through a process of handling, and in some cases forcing or manipulating, the images to “make known” a particular narrative surrounding the image. This chapter is about the digital access to intimacy in this sense: the process by which the photographs are replicated, used and manipulated by artists, journalists and web users alike. The frame remains a key concept, and this chapter will continue to lay emphasis on how the falling-body photograph is actively framed by diverse framing narrators. Moving beyond the framing narratives that lead up to and were immediately produced by the moment of the attacks, I use the meshwork of framing narratives as a way to document the creation and intersection of varying interventions into the falling-body image. I interrogate some of these framing narratives in order to investigate how the falling-body photographs navigate established and unauthorised framings, tracing their “everyday and performative routes or narratives”, where “people, cameras, photographs and researchers’ trajectories become interwoven” (Pink, “Sensory” 7). Although the falling-body image is not necessarily what might be understood as an “everyday” image, its entanglement on a variety of websites and platforms indicates that the image has come to be an integral part in the continuing development of our understanding of the attacks.

Many studies of the falling-body image after 9/11 consider Tom Junod’s 2003 *Esquire* article “The Falling Man”. My project, however, presents and unravels Junod’s article as a framing narrative rather than an unquestioned accompaniment to Drew’s photograph. As a men’s magazine *Esquire* brings its own institutional framing to bear on the

photograph, in addition to Junod's journalism. More specifically, I will scrutinise one of the key tenets of Junod's article: that the falling-body image, following its "disappearance" from mainstream media, only appeared in online spaces that trafficked in violent and sensationalised imagery. Instead, I detail both web memorials and online preservation projects that seek to document, remember and mourn those who fell from the towers.

Although Drew's photograph plays a role in this chapter, the opening story makes it clear that my focus has started to shift towards the processes by which various participants in this meshwork contend with images of falling rather than a specific image. Drew's photograph can be seen as a means to navigate this meshwork, a way through the manifold and complex ways the falling-body image has re-appeared in the years since the attacks. Through this investigation, I mean to show that people did look at, re-appropriate, document and memorialise the falling-body image through vernacular understandings of the event as a result of an anxiety that these images and experiences would disappear.

The responses to the attacks hosted by the Internet do not just take the form of online memorials. Through my research, I have found examples of Drew's photograph on a conspiracy theory forum and as memetic content. The users behind these examples enact a digital access to intimacy for different reasons than Rambousek and Schneemann. Users scrutinise and manipulate the photograph, pressing into and handling it, in order to "make it known" as an image that has been doctored in some way or as a mechanism to make fun of a very public mistake far removed from the attacks. In both cases, the falling-body image is the raw material for potentially endless supposition and sharing, and has quite clearly been altered in the process. The final section of the chapter returns to the process of memorialisation, but with emphases on the relentless flow of the meshwork of falling-body images and also the intersubjective experience of the image. The participant in the intervention into the image makes this intervention process a clear element in their response.

Firstly, I examine two public memorial projects that have online elements to demonstrate, as in the discussion of the web memorials, that the falling-body photograph was not merely trafficked on pornographic websites, but also to document the slipperiness of the image as it moves with the relentless flow of the meshwork. Secondly, I return to Schneemann's falling-body work to explore how she enacts an explicitly female intervention into the image, in direct contrast to the framing narratives of Drew, Kleinfeld and Junod that I have outlined up to this point. Schneemann uses her own body to meet, touch and respond to the falling body, complicating Junod's assertion that "[w]e're all falling men now" by contradicting this gendering of the photograph and its potential meaning ("Falling (Mad) Man"). The process of meaning-making through a tactile and open conception of Internet- and computer-based interventions into the falling-body image becomes key to appreciating how we have lived with the image, and the attacks, in the years afterwards.

2.2 Tom Junod, *Esquire* and the Internet

2.2.1 The "Junod Image": Tom Junod and *Esquire* Magazine

In an article for the *Los Angeles Times* in 2003, Richard Drew states that his photograph was initially "denounced as coldblooded, ghoulis and sadistic" and then it "vanished". "*Esquire* magazine", he continues, "just published a 7,000-word essay that hails it as an icon, a masterpiece and a touching work of art" ("The Horror of 9/11"). This *Esquire* essay Drew refers to is Tom Junod's "The Falling Man" from the September 2003 issue. Like Drew and N. R. Kleinfeld, Junod has also been the recipient of several prestigious awards. In 1995 and 1996, whilst working for *GQ*, the American Society of Magazine Editors awarded him National Magazine Awards for two of his essays. He has been nominated for the award an additional nine times, making it to the final for "The Falling Man" in 2004 ("ASME Winners and Finalists Database"). To celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary in 2008, *Esquire* named "The Falling Man" one of the seven best stories in the magazine's history ("The Seven

Greatest Stories”). “The Falling Man” is both a pursuit for the identity of the person in the photograph, and also an attempt to rehabilitate Drew’s photograph into the visual record of the attacks, and our understanding of the event. For Junod, this search involves encounters with Drew, artist Eric Fischl’s sculpture “Tumbling Woman” (2002), families of victims and the potential families of the person in the photograph in order to establish the photograph as an “unmarked grave” for all the victims of the attacks and a symbol for contemporary American (masculine) identity. After all, Junod concludes assertively, “we have known who the Falling Man is all along”. This chapter, however, questions such a statement: do we know who “he” is? Do “we” know what the photograph means? My intention is not to condemn Junod’s article but to unravel it as an explicit framing narrative.

The perceived significance of Junod’s article created the environment for several follow-up articles. In September 2011, Junod returned to the photograph and to the families of Norberto Hernandez and Jonathan Briley, proposed identities for the person in the photograph. Four months later, following controversial advertisements for the new series of *Mad Men* which featured large billboards with the silhouette of a person falling, *Esquire* published Junod’s “Falling (Mad) Man” (Figure 2.5). In this article, Junod responded to the controversy surrounding these advertisements which appeared to reference the photographs of people falling from the WTC, and the accusation that *Mad Men* exploited “a sacred 9/11 image for its own purposes”. Even though, as Junod states, the image was initially “deemed anything but sacred”, he finds these accusations strange, and instead seems to praise the advertisement for reminding viewers that the consequences of the attacks still need to be addressed (“Falling (Mad) Man”). In December 2014, however, Junod responded to a “shameful” cartoon from the *New York Post* of a person falling in the same position as the person in Drew’s photograph. Falling next to him is a reporter with a microphone asking “How do you feel about enhanced interrogation?” (“The Torturous, Shameless Exploitation

of the Falling Man”) (Figure 2.6). Whereas the *Mad Men* poster, for Junod, testifies to the way public uncertainty and unease after 9/11 have been “mined brilliantly” by the show, the *Post* cartoon is “reminiscent of those awful commercials in which iconographic figures of the past are yanked from their graves in order to shill for, say, Burger King”. Perhaps, in the last instance, Junod has become one of the “guardians of American culture” that he had previously criticised (“Falling (Mad) Man”). In the years since the original article, then, Junod has become a de facto spokesperson for the appropriate ways to reference the photograph.

Within scholarship concerning the idea of falling after 9/11, “The Falling Man” itself is deemed both worthy of admiration and almost unequivocally representative of the meaning of this photograph. For example, Schotzko quotes the entire introductory paragraph in the first chapter of *Learning How to Fall* (30). In a later chapter, Schotzko describes Junod’s article as “still one of the most comprehensive and compassionate sources of information about the man in Drew’s photograph” (162). In her essay “Forecasting Falls: Icarus from Freud to Auden to 9/11”, Pamela Thurschwell recounts the same opening section, stating that Junod “vividly captures the disturbing aesthetics of the photo” (224). Similarly, in *Falling After 9/11*, Aimee Pozorski notes Junod’s “poetic description” which links the photograph to art in his “important essay” using language that is “equally as lyrical and affective as the poetry and fiction” she analyses elsewhere in her work (11, 62, 66). Pozorski positions Junod’s work as a point of comparison for Diane Seuss’s poem “Falling Man”, even terming the description of the falling person’s “black-and-white work uniform against the black-and-white metallic towers” found in both pieces “*the Junod image*” (118, emphasis added).

Consequently, these critical works present “The Falling Man” as an undisputed canonical text and a key component in the creation of a narrative of falling after the event.¹⁸

Returning to this famous opening paragraph it is undoubtedly a captivating narrative, but it also transforms the photograph into a symbol or analogy for the event or for contemporary culture after the attacks. From the first sentence (“In the picture, he departs from this earth like an arrow”) to the repetition of “appear(s)” (“He appears relaxed”; “He appears comfortable”; “He does not appear intimidated”) and the description of the person as “perfectly vertical”, “rebellious”, and “a missile, a spear, bent on attaining his own end”, Junod creates a lasting story of bravery and heroism. The article’s heroisation of the person in the photograph continues in the conclusion: “One of the most famous photographs in human history became an unmarked grave, and the man buried inside its frame – the Falling Man – became the Unknown Soldier in a war whose end we have not yet seen”. As Noha Hamdy astutely deduces from Junod’s article, his narrative is “clearly threaded with the ultra-nationalistic discourse of war”, transforming the person in the photograph “from victim into hero-soldier who has fought in a war and thus emerges as a martyr” (253). The narrative is seductive but, through a process of what Hamdy calls “metonymic digression”, the article presents the falling-body photograph as a static object or symbol within the unfolding consequences of the attacks (253). Junod’s narrative is rooted to the content of the photograph itself instead of examining the “rhythm, circulation, and proliferation” of the image after the attacks (Rubenstein and Sluis 31). This criticism of Junod’s essay is not intended to dismiss “The Falling Man” but to position the article as a framing narrative that should be analysed and interrogated for its framing qualities rather than accepted as a

¹⁸ Further studies that have included Junod’s article as a source of descriptive information for the photograph, especially for his suggestion that the photographs became “taboo”, include Faulkner 67-9, Mihaila 86, Kroes 6, Mauro 584, Carroll “Limits” 108, Lurie 181, Vanderwees “Tightrope” 229-31 and Vanderwees “Photographs” 175.

canonical text. Like the framing narratives in the first chapter, we need to ask: how does Junod's article shape and interpret Drew's photograph? What work does it perform in the representation of and continuing references to the image? What are the article's fallacies and weaknesses? A photograph, that was initially deemed taboo, becomes the subject of a cartoon referencing current events in a mainstream news publication thirteen years later. There is a story here beyond resonance and repugnance that attends more fully to the pervasiveness of the photograph and can perhaps explain how the photograph returns to mainstream media ten years after Junod's original article.

In the 1960s, a new style of writing emerged in American magazines that made the personal voice of the writer a central element of the article, so that for the first time "journalists self-consciously included themselves in the picture" (Coward 52). "The New Journalism", according to Tom Wolfe, one of the pioneers of this style, was a journalism that would "read like a novel" (4). Wolfe explains that in 1962, he picked up a copy of *Esquire* magazine and read a story called "Joe Louis: The King as a Middle-Aged Man" by Gay Talese. "The piece didn't open like an ordinary magazine article," Wolfe recalls, "[i]t opened with the tone and mood of a short story", with an "intimate scene" between retired boxer Joe Louis and his third wife (23). Wolfe marvelled that Talese could go from relating the intimate details of a man's life to doing "an amazing cakewalk down Memory Lane in his second wife's living room" (24). Rosalind Coward explains that these "new journalists" rejected "traditional notions of impartiality often leading to the immersion in the subject and characters" through "extended participant observation", with the story "unfolding rather than being delivered in condensed form" (57). "It seemed all important to *be there* when dramatic scenes took place," Wolfe explains further, "to get the dialogue, the gestures, the facial expressions, the details of the environment" (35). The new journalism encouraged a writing

style coloured by small and intimate details that reflected “wider social and emotional shifts” (Coward 67).

Esquire was a key platform for this new style thanks to the foresight and commercial savvy of Harold Hayes, editor from 1956 to 1973, who opened the pages of the magazine to “imaginative reportage” in a bid to boost dropping magazine sales (Rivers and Dennis 42). Junod’s article, published forty years after the style emerged, appears to adhere to some of these literary techniques. Through immersion in the story, Coward explains, writers present “every scene to the reader through the eyes of a particular character giving the reader the experience of being inside the character’s mind” (57). In “The Falling Man”, Junod moves through his description of the photograph, to a section on Drew, back to the day of the attacks when people began to jump, to mainstream newspapers, to the sculptor Eric Fischl and to the families of Hernandez and Briley, in his attempt to piece together his own narrative of the image. Beginning with a reader who, in 2003, might have known very little about the photograph, Junod builds the layers of his article through direct quotation, description and imaginative writing to guide the reader to his conclusion of the photograph (Zdovc 26). As a framing narrative, placing “The Falling Man” within a wider history of long-form, literary journalism emphasises the subjective nature of the piece. Exploring this frame is a reminder that it was Junod himself conducting interviews and following leads. Like the significance of Drew’s and Kleinfield’s bodies in the initial contexts of production and publication of the falling-body image, it is essential to resituate Junod himself within the unfolding lines of the meshwork of falling-body images as a writer from a magazine with particular conventions offering a subjective examination of the photograph.

Christine Mueller wonders at the unlikeliness of *Esquire* as a “forum” and Tom Junod as an “origin” for a “somber deliberation on such a sensitive topic” (52). As she notes, *Esquire*’s Editor-in-Chief David Granger calls the publication: “a magazine for men. Not a

fashion magazine for men, not a health magazine for men, not a money magazine for men. It is not any of these things; it is all of them. It is, and has been for nearly seventy years, a magazine about the interests, the curiosity, the passions, of men” (“What is *Esquire*?”). Similarly, the Hearst Corporation, publisher of *Esquire*, identifies it as a magazine that “defines, reflects and celebrates what it means to be a man in contemporary American culture” (“*Esquire*”). Mueller suggests that the fact Junod’s article ends with the sentence “we have known who the Falling Man is all along” indicates the “predicament” of the person in the photograph and therefore “concerns this magazine and this author because it is a predicament in which they can see themselves and their readers” (53). The fact that *Esquire* published a defining article concerning Drew’s photograph is, then, an altogether appropriate topic as it is, in the view of the magazine, a profile piece about a famous “man”. The magazine’s history of long-form journalism is saturated with the narratives of well-known men. If the publication of an AP image in the *Times* ensured wide circulation, and initial framing of the image as a news photograph, its placement in *Esquire* ensures a subjective and storied response to the falling-body photograph and, as I will show, a framing of the photograph as an image of a man for a male audience.

From its first issue in September 1933, then editor Arnold Gingrich worked to present *Esquire* as “a magazine for men only” in a market supposedly saturated with women’s magazines where men were made to feel “like an intruder upon gynaecic mysteries” (“A Magazine for Men Only”). Published during the Great Depression, at a time when a quarter of American workers were unemployed, the magazine championed “an up-market culture of fashion and leisure” (Osgerby 66) to suggest that the masculine ideal is forged in the realms of “appearance, manners, taste, and personality”, not employment or financial success (Pendergast 220). Indeed, Tom Pendergast states that the *Esquire* man was “above all else a consumer”: of fashion and advertisements, of women in cartoon and pin-up form, and of

fiction (223). In her feminist critique of the magazine, Kenon Breazeale writes that from its inception *Esquire* presented “the first thoroughgoing, conscious attempt to organize a consuming male audience”, with an editorial staff who “sought to constitute consumption as a new arena for masculine privilege by launching in text and image what amounted to an oppositional meta-commentary on female identity” (1). In the uncertain economic times of the 1930s, the magazine sought to offer the “complete package” of what it meant to be a man (Pendergast 223).

Esquire as the “site of a marketable new male identity” had to find ways to distance this nascent identity from similar content in women’s magazines (Breazeale 3). Breazeale explains that to ensure this separation, the magazine instigated the displacement of “all the women-identified associations so firmly lodged at the center of America’s commodified domestic environment” (6). The magazine, Breazeale argues, routinely attempted to dislodge women from the “arena of domestic consumption” by, for example, complaining that women were decidedly inept when it came to cooking, dressing well and discerning cheap from expensive alcohol (6-7). In the magazine, “woman” became a byword for incompetence. Breazeale draws attention to several examples of this strategy. For example, in the September 1939 issue, in his satirical piece “Women Can’t Cook”, Dick Pine asserts that “[m]en are revolting ... against female domination in the kitchen ... The little women, in their zeal for economy, health, and beauty, have completely forgotten that most people (especially men) are equipped with palates”. Similarly, in “Ladies are Lousy Drivers” from the January 1941 issue, Robert Marks and Hart Stilwell write

If a woman is pretty enough, or charming enough, or artful enough, let her have the road ... The corollary to this is that only one-half of one per cent of women are either pretty or charming or artful; and that means, in terms of simple arithmetic, that ninety-nine and a half per cent of the women drivers are automotive dubs.

Evidently, the representations of women in these early issues demonstrate quite plainly that they did not belong in *Esquire*'s paradigm of consumption. Furthermore, the magazine's creation of content designed to shape a consuming male identity was predicated on scorning female identity.

By September 2003, exactly seventy years after its first issue, *Esquire* magazine was a little more subtle in its editorials. Ironically, however, there is a satirical piece in the issue entitled "7 Shocking Things We Learned From Women's Magazines" which includes "She Totally Has A Name For Every Hairdo" and "She's Playing You For A Sucker" (Radosh). This list, unwittingly or not, recalls Gingrich's frustration with women's magazines, albeit with a little less of his bitterness. Junod's article itself is split in two, and the pages between the two sections feature provocative photographs (of actress Rosario Dawson), the story of a male *Esquire* journalist who has recovered from cancer and an image of actor James Caan wielding a mallet for a high striker. Furthermore, there are advertisements for watches and cigars after the final section of the article, as well as a page called "Men's Marketplace" with notices for hair loss remedies, knives, "turbo torches" and weight loss solutions. Junod's article, and by extension the falling-body image, is literally framed by a similar rhetoric found in the earlier issues: a distinct sense of masculine identity, sexualised images of women and, above all, consumable goods. Although Junod presents the falling-body image as a sacred object and a memorial to all the victims of that day, the surrounding context offers contrasting narratives.

This does not mean, however, that the magazine turns Drew's photograph into a consumable object, or an image with which only men can fully engage. What a more rigorous analysis of *Esquire* as a framing device for the photograph provides is an awareness that Drew's image has been "accompanied and intertwined" with these elements of *Esquire*'s history as it moves through the meshwork (Pink, "Sensory" 12). As one of the earliest, most

recognisable, and most discussed, framing narratives for the photograph, Junod's article as a piece of literary journalism indicates the potential for a subjective intervention into the falling-body image. By re-situating Junod himself within the unfolding story in "The Falling Man", I am able to position the writer, like Drew and Kleinfield, within an ever-evolving meshwork of bodies implicated in the continuing movement of the image. Similarly, the article's position in a men's magazine with advertisements, photographs and stories which figure within the magazine's history of endorsing a reader who is a distinctly male consumer, allows for multiple narratives to flow over and around the image. The distinct "maleness" of Junod's article, for instance, can be seen clearly through its inclusion in the 2004 issue of *Women & Performance*, which attests to diverse examples of, and responses to, the falling body. Werner Wolf suggests that framing activity consists of the application, modification, and rejection of existing frames by other frames (4). Junod's *Esquire* article is undoubtedly a key framing of the photograph but it is certainly not the only one, and it is also not immune to modification or rejection. In other words, there are further framings of the photograph that directly or indirectly confront and rework the narrative in "The Falling Man". Junod writes that the person in Drew's photograph is "falling through more than the blank blue sky. He is falling through the vast spaces of memory and picking up speed" ("The Falling Man"). The person and the photograph do not fall through empty space, but are instead caught in the entangled frames of the meshwork, which undermines the perceived authority and sanctity of Junod's narrative. *Esquire* is not merely a vehicle for the circulation of the photograph, but works as a framing narrative with obvious conventions.

2.2.2 Resistance to Junod: Personal Blogs and Web Memorials

The foundation of Junod's initial piece for *Esquire* is the public resistance to the falling-body photographs. Junod states that this aversion started immediately with television networks

choosing not to film those who fell. He writes that the images of people falling became taboo “by consensus”, and were eventually only shown on television if the people were “blurred and unidentifiable”, and then “not shown at all”. “And so it went”, he observes, until the photographs “disappeared” (“The Falling Man”). The paragraph that this thesis is most concerned with, however, reads as follows:

More and more the jumpers – and their images – were relegated to the Internet underbelly, where they became the provenance of the shock sites that also traffic in the autopsy photos of Nicole Brown Simpson and the videotape of Daniel Pearl’s execution, and where it is impossible to look at them without attendant feelings of shame and guilt ... [T]he desire to face the most disturbing aspects of our most disturbing day was somehow ascribed to voyeurism, as though the jumpers’ experience, instead of being central to the horror, was tangential to it, a sideshow best forgotten. (“The Falling Man”).

Junod’s writing seems to suggest that, before his article, attempts to reckon with the jumpers, were ultimately edited or censored. Instead the article indicates that the falling-body image after 9/11 was only the concern of websites that circulated, and revelled in, obscene and gruesome material. The implication is that Junod’s article was the crucial first step in constructing a thorough vocabulary with which to discuss those who fell from the towers, and in articulating their significance.

Some critics have queried this element of Junod’s work. Laura Frost remarks that whilst Junod is correct to suggest that the photographs of the “jumpers” became peripheral in media coverage of the attacks, cameras actually turned towards the reactions of bystanders as people fell from the towers. Frost writes that “[a]s the images themselves were held back and in their place was put the image of wondering, speculating witnesses, questions about the interpretation of what was being seen came to the forefront” (186). Andrea D. Fitzpatrick also contests Junod’s suggestion that the images of people falling from the towers fell under a blanket of silence following their initial publication:

Junod describes how the images of the “jumpers” were reduced to a “lemming-like class” to be viewed only on uncensored sites on “the Internet underbelly.” That the

identities of the dead revolved around this ambivalent notion of agency was a significant factor in proscribing identification of the dead with proper names or depiction of their experiences. Yet although a coherent linguistic response seems blocked, there were descriptive terms chosen and affixed to these subjects and what they represent that hold much weight. (91).

These “descriptive terms”, Fitzpatrick continues, include the choice between using “jumping” or “falling” to describe the bodies, terms that speak to varying levels of agency (92). Even if the photographs were widely censored, lexical decisions were still being made. Frost and Fitzpatrick suggest that although Junod is correct in his observation that many media outlets overlooked these photographs in favour of more redemptive images in the aftermath of the attacks, the photographs of falling bodies *did* enter into spaces of interpretation, both experiential and linguistic, beyond supposed shock sites located in the Internet’s “underbelly”. In fact, as I will show, the falling-body photographs became entangled in the Internet as an intensity of place.

Users on forums, discussion sites and in blogs attempted to reckon with the existence of the falling bodies, and even catalogue the resulting photographs. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2001 fifty-five percent of American adults used the Internet, whereas in 2015 this figure had increased to eight-four percent (“Americans’ Internet Access”). By September 2001, the *New York Times* had been publishing material online for around six years (Lewis). In addition, Google launched its image search function just two months before the attacks, with an index of 150 million images (Zipern). In 1999, Darcy DiNucci stated that the “first glimmerings of Web 2.0” were beginning to appear, defining this new stage in the development of the Internet as a time when the Web will “fragment into countless permutations” and “will be understood not as screenfuls [sic] of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, *the ether through which interactivity happens*” (32, emphasis added). DiNucci’s terminology was taken up by Tim O’Reilly in 2004, who stated that Web 2.0 promoted participation over publication (1), and Bart Decrem, who gave Web 2.0 the alias of

the “participatory web” (Prandini and Ramilli 2). Despite its relative limitations, the Internet *did* host responses to the attacks between 2001 and 2003. In this burgeoning online environment of user-generated content, the images of falling bodies were circulated online through personal blogs and web memorials. Junod’s fleeting discussions of the “Internet underbelly” do not fully attest to or untangle the various ways the falling bodies move through the meshwork of interconnecting websites and contributors.

In *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, Henry Jenkins et al outline their suspicion of the “sunny Web 2.0 rhetoric” (55). They argue that the “corporate practices” that lie behind the Web 2.0 participation model in which a “platform for sharing”, like YouTube, is also a business model that monitors and removes content, indicates that sharing material online “remains a contested practice” (48-56). They propose instead “an emerging hybrid model of circulation, where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces determine how material is shared across and among cultures in far more participatory (and messier) ways” (1). They term this model the “spreadability” of media, referring to the “potential – both technical and cultural – for audiences to share content for their own purposes” (3). The circulation of the falling-body image has, as I will show, plenty of conflicts and contradictions. Although Junod asserts that the evidence of 9/11’s falling bodies only appeared on certain sites that either traded in extreme content or on personal blogs that deemed photographs like Drew’s “disgusting”, there were plenty of other users repositioning and remixing these images for their own purposes or reasons. The idea of a messy web of participation is particularly helpful for this thesis as it attends to the ways “audiences [use] content in *unanticipated* ways as they retrofit material to the contours of their particular community”, leading us to interventions far beyond the parameters of Junod’s article (Jenkins et al 6).

During his research for “The Falling Man”, Junod notes that he “Googles” “how many jumped on 9/11”, but finds only reproach from the online material:

[O]ne falls into some blogger’s trap, slugged “Go Away, No Jumpers Here”, where the bait is one’s own need to know: “I’ve got at least three entries in my referrer logs that show someone is doing a search on Google for ‘how many people jumped from WTC’. My September 11 post had made mention of that terrible occurrence [sic], so now any pervert looking for that will get my site’s URL. I’m disgusted. I tried, but cannot find any reason someone would want to know something like that... Whatever. If that’s why you’re here— you’re busted. Now go away”.

Junod does not divulge the identity of the blog or the blogger, but a search of the material he quotes raises a post from a blog called “Insolvent Republic of Blogistan” on 12 September 2003 which calls “The Falling Man” a “pretty good article” but also directly criticises Junod’s writing:

If you Google the words “how many jumped on 9/11” with the quotes you get bupkis [sic]. Without the quotes, you don’t fall into a blogger’s trap but get an assortment of entries on the subject ... you ... do not fall into a blogger’s trap, but do get led to the exact entry Junod mentions ... which is TECHFLUID, the blog of Chari Daignault ... So there’s probably a little of the high-journalist contempt for blogland in there too ... I guess maybe *Esquire* readers don’t use the internet? (“Some Old Skool Warblogger Fact Checking”).

Chari Daignault has since removed or deleted her blog, but a search on the Internet Archive locates the posts involved. On 11 September 2002, Daignault published a post describing her memories of 9/11, remarking “[w]e were watching as people jumped from the damaged areas of the towers to their deaths” (“Remembering 9.11.01”). Five days later, Daignault published the post that Junod quotes, telling those searching for how many people jumped from the towers to “go away” (“UGH...GO AWAY, NO JUMPERS HERE”). Evidently, her comment about seeing people jump flagged her post to anyone searching the Internet for the falling victims, and she decided to respond to the increased interest in her blog.

Following the publication of Junod’s a year after her initial posts, Daignault amended her original “GO AWAY” post:

[E]dited: 09/10/2003 – Please do not make assumptions as to why this entry was posted. If you want to know, just ask. Any journalist with a modicum of integrity would not have changed the context of this post and made presumptions as to why it was published. Any journalist with a modicum of integrity who truly wanted to present the truth would have *asked*. But of course, sometimes the truth doesn't sell newspapers, does it?

Both Daignault and the blog poster end their comments by directly questioning the accuracy of Junod's article, suggesting that "The Falling Man" misrepresents the content of the blog post, and therefore misleads the reader about the representation of the falling victims on the Internet. The "Warblogger" post indicates the gulf between the understanding of *Esquire* readers and the understanding of Internet contributors, whereas Daignault is even more damning of Junod's research style. These responses to "The Falling Man" are telling of the relationship between authorised and mainstream accounts, and unsanctioned, personal modes of interpreting this aspect of the attacks. The Internet hosted a much more complex and varied engagement with those who fell from the towers than Junod's article indicates. As the photographs of falling disperse outwards along the meshwork, Internet users share, respond to, manipulate and reframe them, participating in the on-going construction of meaning. Daignault's blog post is not voyeuristic, does not traffic extreme photographs and videos and is not disgusted by the idea of the "jumpers" themselves. Her reference to people jumping is, as the diary format of her blog suggests, a way to record and preserve her thoughts and feelings from that day.

Other early responses to the falling-body images took the form of Internet memorials. In *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (1997), Marita Sturken writes that cultural memory is "produced through objects, images, and representations", and that these are not "vessels" but "technologies of memory ... objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning" (9). She describes public forms of commemoration as a "contested form of remembrance in

which cultural memories slide through and into each other, creating a narrative tangle” (44).¹⁹ Pink’s contemplation of images and the meshwork recalls Sturken’s terminology when she asserts that “[i]mages ... are not ‘of’ places or things ... but rather they are inevitably and unavoidably *in* places: they are produced by moving *through* and not over or on environments, and they are ... outcomes of and in movement” (“Sensory” 9). The emphasis on movement and process is clear in both cases. Robin Wagner-Pacifici writes that “[c]ollective memory vibrates” (301), and can be “interstitial, provisional” (311). In the same vein, Paolo Jedlowski asserts that memory is not a “store” but a “plurality of interrelated processes”: “a complex network of activities” indicating that “the past never remains ‘one and the same’, but is constantly selected, filtered, and restructured in terms set by the questions and necessities of the present” (30). Rather than figuring as a receptacle for memory and symbolism, as Junod’s article positions the image, the memory practices surrounding Drew’s photograph are multiple, processual, intertwined and demonstrative of a digital means of achieving an intimate connection to the falling-body image.

“Wer Is Myki”, a self-defined “American Memorial Tribute”, was created by a man named Michael from Ohio who decided in the immediate aftermath of the attacks that he needed to document certain images and news stories because he did not believe “major websites would have this information for any length of time” (“About the Author”). A page titled “WHY Did Victims Jump from the World Trade Center” from February 2002 includes quotes from suicide experts and psychiatrists, comparisons to other disasters and, most importantly, photographs of people falling (Figure 2.7). Similarly, a page from “Rim

¹⁹ *Tangled Memories*, released near the end of the twentieth century, outlines an understanding of memory and “its role in cultural production”, defining memory outside of “truth” and “evidence” and within its capacity for “inventive social practice” (259). As I will show, my research is also concerned with the “narrative tangles” that ensue through the conflict and correspondence of public and private commemoration. Whilst Sturken’s work focuses on the production of cultural memory through offline sources (such as memorials and films), I am interested in the digital access to intimacy here: the way that people use the Internet as a way to become closer to the falling-body image. With increasing Internet usage, users in the participatory web have greater access to material and so these narrative tangles become denser, more complex and more widespread.

Country”, a website for Arizona’s mountain communities, from September 2002 professes to show “[i]mages rarely, if ever, seen in the mainstream press”, and includes a page with nine photographs of falling victims (“There was no war before September 11, 2001”) (Figure 2.8). Far from shock sites, what this citizen journalism suggests is a desire gather and keep hold of news photographs that the authors fear may disappear, and interweave them within the author’s own narrative. The “Wer Is Myki” homepage is filled with graphics, hyperlinks, photographs and, much like Mike Rambousek’s DVD montages, accompanying music. The “Rim Country” page also includes the text from Dennis Cauchon’s and Martha Moore’s article on those who fell from February 2002, a video clip called *9/11: Remembering the Jumpers*, a poem entitled “For the WTC Jumpers”, links to the beheading videos of four men taken hostage in Iraq, an animated American flag and quotes from George W. Bush. In this case, evidently, the falling-body photographs are reframed according to an extremely patriotic narrative with a particular view on the attacks but there is no sense of repulsion or perverse enjoyment attached to these photographs.

Both pages have the structure of a digital scrapbook, borrowing pieces from different media to articulate a personalised memorial to the event in a public format. Scrapbooks, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, are blank books “in which pictures, newspaper cuttings, and the like are *pasted for preservation*” (emphasis added). In her exploration of the practice of scrapbooking from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance, Ellen Gruber Garvey writes that during these transformative times, people made newspaper clipping scrapbooks in order to save material that meant something to them, showing how people “grappled with what they read” (4). “In the nineteenth century”, she asserts, “readers adapted to the proliferation of print by cutting it up and saving it, reorganizing it, putting their own stamp on it, and sometimes recirculating it” (10). Both “Wer Is Myki” and “Rim Country” express an awareness of, and even anxiety over, the potential for the falling-body photographs to

disappear from view altogether. In direct contrast to “The Falling Man”, where Junod positions the repression of the photograph in newspapers and its appearance on Internet blogs as a negative transition, web contributors were just as concerned that the falling-body photographs might never be seen again. Although these websites are not physical scrapbooks, the need to document and preserve experience remains. The creators of these sites used the web to create a digital access to intimacy: to both hold onto the falling-body image (a digital version of *pressing* clippings into a scrapbook) and “make it known” amongst the flux of photographic material after the attacks. Both web memorials present memory as a process intertwined with creativity, imagination and, above all, a vernacular presentation of the terrorist attacks. Like Mike Rambousek’s DVD montages, the creators of “Wer is Myki” and the page on “Rim Country” interweave photographs of the visible victims from the attacks as part of their alternative narratives of the event, not to satisfy a voyeuristic impulse or express disgust.

Aaron Hess and Lee Jarvis use the idea of processual memory to investigate 9/11 Internet memorials. Hess, in particular, is concerned with the “production of vernacular voice in response to the event” where web memorials “offer an individual and vernacular form of memorializing, which highlights the interests of ‘ordinary people’ and their personally situated interpretations of national tragedy” (812-15). Much of the material available on web memorials such as “Wer Is Myki” and “Rim Country” is from other sources (Hess 824). Images such as Drew’s will have been copied from other sites, perhaps other web memorials or mainstream news websites. The photographs, in other words, move through intersecting pathways of interpretation. The production of memory is also a process “[b]rought into being through effort and labour ... characterized, as such, by dynamism and flux” (Jarvis, “Remember” 72). Memory projects such as the 9/11 web memorials participate in the moving meshwork of images and interpretations. These sites stand in direct contrast to Junod’s

representation of Internet activity regarding the falling victims, and scholarship concerning Junod's article. Web creators on the Internet *were* grappling with the implications of these images, and participating in how the "jumpers" were remembered. Rather than a brief and somewhat incorrect comment, the place of these photographs within online frameworks deserves more attention. Whilst Junod's article appears definitive, or at least a substantial foundation for the narrative surrounding the falling-body photograph, other participants in the construction of the image also brought their own modes of interpretation to bear on the image. It is important to pull this thread in Junod's article because it demonstrates that, even from the very beginning, photographs like Drew's were being assimilated away from mainstream accounts of the event. The photographs of people falling from the towers constantly move along new lines of interpretation that we can follow. "The Falling Man" and its counter-framings testify to the intersecting frames within the meshwork of images of falling bodies.

2.3 The Internet Underbelly: The Falling Body Online

2.3.1 The Falling-Body Image: Conspiracy Theory

In "The Torturous, Shameless Exploitation of the Falling Man", Tom Junod responds to the "shameless and grotesque" cartoon in the *New York Post* that refers explicitly to Drew's photograph (Figure 2.6). The cartoon itself is a response to an interview by former Vice President of the United States, Dick Cheney, where he declared that the Bush administration was innocent of all accusations of torture during the "War on Terror" because torture is "what 19 guys armed with airline tickets and box cutters did to 3,000 Americans on 9/11" (qtd. in Junod, "Torturous"). "The Falling Man", Junod writes, "as he dies, because he dies, must be in favour of enhanced interrogation ... must agree with Dick Cheney". He states that the artist is "only a cartoonist" and "lacks the power to commit any sin more grievous than the sin of tasteless exploitation". This judgement on the behalf of Junod, however, allows him to miss a

key element of the cartoon, and thus of the evolution of the falling-body image. Now, over a decade after the attacks, a major American newspaper has deemed it acceptable to make a cartoon out of “the most famous picture nobody’s ever seen” in order to respond to current events (Drew qtd. in Rich). The propriety of the image being used in this way is only one half of the story. However much Junod may abhor this turn of events, Drew’s photograph can no longer be conceived as just the “Unknown Soldier”: various sites and users have ensured that the photograph is *made known*, in one way or another.

The “9/11 Truth Movement” is the term given to “a loose coalition of pressure groups” (Knight 170) “who promote the belief that the US government was to some degree involved in orchestrating the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001” (Jones 360). According to Peter Knight, this movement has gradually divided into two groups. Firstly, “Letting It Happen on Purpose” (LIHOP), groups that believe the Bush administration knowingly ignored warnings about the attacks, and secondly, “Making It Happen on Purpose” (MIHOP), others who believe rather more controversially that the government and intelligence agencies actively orchestrated the destruction of the towers (170). One particular faction of MIHOP proponents argues that the towers were not even destroyed by planes, but by “controlled demolition” (Knight 171). Simon Shack, of the film *September Clues* and its attendant websites, is one such advocate of the “no planes” theory. Shack writes that the WTC complex was destroyed by “co-ordinated demolition” after the buildings were evacuated, asserting that the destruction of the buildings was a “pretext to wage hugely profitable wars”. These events, according to Shack, were obscured from the public by digitally manipulated news broadcasts and fabricated amateur video aided by the use of electromagnetic weaponry to deactivate any unauthorised camera equipment (“Deconstructing 9/11”).

It is this particular element of the “September Clues” version of events that is most significant for this thesis. Shack and the users of the site’s forum, “Clues Forum”, are

adamant that the footage of the attacks was “a computer-animated, pre-fabricated movie” designed to “‘sell’ a fictitious terror attack to the world” (“The Power of Imagery”). The photographs and video footage of people falling from the towers, he continues, have been “comprehensively exposed as digital forgeries” (“Deconstructing 9/11”). According to Shack’s logic, recordings of people jumping, even amateur footage, were created for a “specific purpose”: “to convey the idea that the WTC complex was still bustling with bystanders staring at the towers at close range” when “the area was, at the time, mostly evacuated and sealed off” (“Simulated Sceneries: The ‘Jumpers’”). Leaving aside the falsehood of Shack’s claims, I am interested in what it means for the falling-body photograph to be enmeshed in the threads of a conspiracy narrative framing. Implicated in the “alternative paradigm of knowing” offered by conspiracy theory, Drew’s photograph is able to move further beyond its original, “authorised” contexts (Birchall 34).

The discussion board “Clues Forum” allows users to offer their own analyses of 9/11 photographs and videos. One particular source of evidence for their claims is extensive and detailed analysis of the photographs and video footage of people falling from the WTC. These “VICSIMS” or the “simulated victims of 9/11”, to use the terminology of the site, are considered to be the product of either film footage of dummies thrown from the top of the towers recorded prior to the attacks or computer graphics (Shack “The VICSIM Report”). Clare Birchall terms conspiracy theory a type of “popular knowledge”: “understandings of the world not bounded by (although certainly in various kinds of relation with) ‘official’, legitimated knowledge” (21). Birchall’s project explores this tension between knowledge that “holds an officially ‘legitimate’ status and that which is considered to be of ‘illegitimate’ and popular status (at least from the vantage point of the ‘official’)” (4). The presence of conspiracy theories after major events like 9/11, Birchall suggests, points towards “the inability of the ‘official’ accounts ... to contain interpretation and prevent a turn to popular

knowledge” (41). Websites like “September Clues” and “Clues Forum” consider “official” material such as news footage and photojournalistic images as material for further, unsanctioned and uncontrolled interpretations of the event. The discussion site allows users to “become involved in the continued construction of this story” (Birchall 44). The conspiracy site, in the vocabulary of this thesis, is a framing device that allows for the interweaving of interpretation and the endless creation of new narratives, precluding any sense of closure for the event.

One particular thread on this board, partially reconstructed from posts on a “Reality Shack” forum, is titled “FALLING MAN – the phony jumpers”. The second post in this thread from user “holyUnderWearBatman” reads as an introduction to the discussion:

For those of you familiar with the 9/11/2001 US Mythos ... a celebrated member of that cast of characters is the heralded Falling Man. This term alludes to the doctored picture of a guy, who looks like he is still sitting in an office chair on the way down, flipped upside down and blended into the background of what is supposed to [be] one of the WTC buildings.

The user continues that 9/11 can be referred to by the “more informed” as ““The Day NY City Rained Office People”” and Drew’s falling-body image is “just like Todd Beamer and his catchy ‘let’s roll’ slogan”, created to supply “the fiber of the emotive units of communication that comprise all 9/11/2001 banter”.²⁰ The same user goes on to describe Junod’s 2003 article for *Esquire* as “[a] very interesting and telling story on this member of the 9/11 Mythos”. The tone, here, could not be more different to the sense of reverence in Junod’s article. In a similar fashion to Chari Daignault and the user behind the “Warblogger” blog post, the unofficial and unsanctioned narrative specifically and directly responds to what *Esquire* terms one of its “classic” articles. The “Clues Forum” user deliberately identifies an

²⁰ Todd Beamer was one of the passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 who attempted to reclaim control of the plane from the hijackers, leading to the plane crashing into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, killing all those on board (Longman).

article that aimed to re-examine and re-legitimize the photograph in order to re-examine and *de*-legitimize the photograph.

Although this thread includes a multitude of different photographs and videos of people falling, there are two posts that refer directly to Drew's photograph. One user, "brianv", rotates and magnifies the photograph, explaining that "[t]hey simply reconstructed and cleaned it up. He's still surrounded by a cloud of pixels. Arrowed corner shows misaligned segment" (Figure 2.9). The accompanying image features an arrow pointing to the person's foot where part of the image appears crooked. The post suggests that Drew's photograph is a fake because of this supposedly careless image editing. Another contributor, "burlington", begins a post by asking: "If you were told a photo of a man falling might be your relative, wouldn't you turn it upside down, to really get a good look at him?" The user then adds a version of Drew's photograph that has been turned upside down, with the addition of three coloured circles (Figure 2.10). One circle relates to the person's arm, another to a "white, bare arm that hangs right behind the jacketed arm" which the user believes to be the person's "REAL arm" resting "casually on the bent leg", and another circle around a "piece of silver pole" on which the person is sitting. The user deduces from this analysis that the person's jacketed torso in the original photograph has actually been digitally superimposed on top of the person's "real" torso. A subsequent image on the post reveals that the user has coloured in the person's jacket to show a black t-shirt with white arms, and therefore it becomes "obvious" to "burlington" that the person is therefore resting their hand on their leg and is actually sat on a stool (Figure 2.11). The implication is that the image has been manipulated in some way to make it look like someone has fallen from the towers when, in the view of the users on the site, no one fell from the towers.

Another user called "IwasBettyOng", responding to this post, asserts similar deductions: "I had the same thoughts as you. A while ago I too turned the photo upside-down

and my immediate thought was of someone riding a bicycle”. “Burlington” later agrees with this analysis: “I agree with you that it was more likely a bicycle, and not a stool as I originally thought. The more I look at the bare white arm and hand in this shot, the more I can see that part of the wrist is blocked by something – most likely [a] bike handle”. User “MsQ” has a different interpretation of the person’s “seated position”, she asks: “How about sitting on a railing?” Like Rambousek, who enacts a digital access to intimacy with Christensen’s photograph to feel closer to his son, these users scrutinise the photograph but for a vastly different purpose: turning it upside down, looking at it closely and creating new narratives around the image. But there are no definitive answers, as these “theories” are presented as first thoughts, “likely” answers and helpful suggestions. These contributors are united by their belief that the photograph is fraudulent, but cannot offer a conclusive analysis of how or why it is deceptive.

Furthermore, this line of inquiry presented by “burlington” is not unchallenged. For example, “nonhocapito” posts the following: “Why are you guys assuming this is even a real person photoshopped [sic]? This is almost certain completely fake CGI ... There is no need to imagine the original pose of an actor when we have no reason to think there was an actor in the first place”. To believe that there were real people falling out of the towers, according to forum moderator “Maat”, is a result of the “controlled ‘truther’ influence of analyzing 9-11 toons as if real [sic]”. Even indeterminate theories find further ambiguity: the users get closer and more occupied with minute details of the image, even as the “truth” behind the photograph moves further from their grasp. This small cross-section of “Clues Forum” reveals the level of possibility for the photograph through the continued construction and layering of theories and stories. The forum style analysis precludes anything resembling a definitive “answer” for these supposed irregularities in the photograph. In fact, authority figures on the board, like “Maat”, actively discourage the search for a definitive answer.

Instead, the always-incomplete threads on the forum's board become part of the unfolding, endless threads of the meshwork.

Birchall observes that what is particularly traumatic about the attacks is “the way in which it opens up and keeps open the possibility of unknowable, future (perhaps worse) traumas” (61). The final comment by “Maat” about the “truther” influence is particularly telling in this regard. Although Knight speaks of a “loose coalition of pressure groups” (170), there is according to Shack “‘infighting’ between 9/11 researchers” and so-called “‘9/11 Truthers’” (“Obstacles to the Truth”). Shack writes that certain high-profile critics of the government's involvement in the attacks, and “Truthers”, including director Michael Moore and Dylan Avery, writer and director of *Loose Change*, purposefully produced documentaries to obscure “the newsmedia's complicity [sic]” and to “ridicule or censor all people aware of the TV fakery” (“Obstacles to the Truth”). Shack even provides evidence of changed rules on the *Loose Change* forum that reads “NPT theories [“no plane theory”], and support of movies like *September Clues*, is not allowed in any way. Planes hit the WTC. We refuse to allow that to be disputed on this forum” (“Obstacles to the Truth”). In the place of a definitive 9/11 conspiracy narrative are a profusion of theories without the possibility of consensus. The entanglement of 9/11 conspiracies is, according to Knight, an “ever-expanding text”, growing larger and more complex but without ever reaching a unanimous verdict (190). Therefore, Drew's photograph, as a part of the ever-unwinding conspiracy narrative, is just as undecidable and unknowable.

For the reason that the conspiracy gives the public a space in which to challenge existing frameworks and rewrite the event, the presence of the falling-body image on *Clues Forum* seems to ask more questions than it answers, suggesting that the event will never find closure (Birchall 44). In a similar fashion to Birchall, Knight writes that

the use of new media techniques in some of the 9/11 conspiracy speculations ... creates strategies of representation that begin to push to the very limit – and even at times undermine – the traditional epistemological structures embedded in conspiracy theories ... they end up creating portraits of highly interconnected but also decentered and deterritorialized networks of vested interests that are not necessarily the product of individual or collective intentionality, producing in effect a picture of what might paradoxically be termed “conspiracy without conspiring”. (166).

Although there is a lingering sense of the perpetrators behind the attacks on “Clues Forum,” “the central idea of intentionality is stretched to the limit, suggesting an infinite spectrum of complicity, collusion, coordination, and consonance” (Knight 185). For example, Shack responds to people asking him if “they” made mistakes in the digital editing of the photographs of falling people by stating: “I don’t know. But does it matter? ... The bottom line is that the entire pool of 9/11 imagery ... turns out to be riddled with such a pervasive amount of blatant forgery as to make it impossible – for any honest person – to ignore”.

Another user, “hoi.polloi”, agrees:

[T]he danger of paying too much attention to the why is giving credit where credit is not due and making the “enemy” out to be something it is not. That’s why I agree with Simon that it’s not important or wise to speculate too deeply beyond what we’ve uncovered on this forum ... there is a general philosophy on this forum of remaining in the very skeptical “no frills” science of is it fake or not? and less focused on the why is it all so fake? [sic].

Rather than setting up “the traditional conspiracy-minded Manichean division of Them and Us”, the “Clues Forum” philosophy instead creates “an infinite regress of connectivity” (Knight 182). The impetus for the site is not singling out a mastermind behind what happened, but following endless trails and patterns, and creating more in the process.

The ideas and gestures on “September Clues” and “Clues Forum” may not be ones we can understand or believe, but the discussions demand that the scope of the narrative surrounding Drew’s image be widened. On the forum, the meaning of the photograph, like the location of the “enemy”, is “endlessly deferred”, and its status cannot be contained by authorised media texts such as Junod’s article for *Esquire* (Knight 193). The significance of

the conspiracy framing narrative for Drew's image is not rooted in the absurd suggestion that the person in the photograph could be sat on a bike or a chair, but in the possibility that such exploratory readings exist in the first place. As Birchall writes, conspiracy theories "draw a line from that event into the future" precluding an end to that event, and consequently the visual material related to that event (62). A conspiracy framing narrative that questions and interrogates the validity of Drew's image creates further threads for the meshwork along which Drew's image can move. These lines into the future are clear evidence that the photographs of people falling were not trapped in the "Internet underbelly" ("The Falling Man"). Instead, the Internet proved to be fertile and creative ground for nourishing the circulation of these images.

2.3.2 *The Falling-Body Image: Internet Meme*

During a match against the USA in the 2010 FIFA World Cup, England goalkeeper Robert Green failed to save a slow shot from U.S. midfielder Clint Dempsey, which resulted in a 1-1 draw. The British popular tabloid newspapers were characteristically merciless. Both the *News of the World* and the *Sunday Mirror* labelled the misfortune "Hand of Clod", echoing Argentinian player Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" goal that knocked England out of the World Cup in 1986 (Rowe 149). The *Sunday Times*, however, made a timely, and unpleasant, reference to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill of the same year, stating Green's mistake was "one disastrous spill that Yanks won't complain about" (qtd. in Rowe 149). Elsewhere, the Internet responded through the creation of memes. For instance, the comedy website "College Humor" posted a video to its YouTube channel a month after the match called "What the English Goalie Was Thinking" that has over three million views (as of 4 December 2016). The first-person perspective video takes the form of Green's inner monologue as the football rolled slowly towards the goal, exaggerating the speed of the ball and therefore mocking his performance. Many of these responses took the form of memes that superimposed Green's

body position when he missed the goal onto photographs in which he, once again, failed to save something (“Robert Green FAIL”).

These memes are documented on the site “Know Your Meme”, one of the “largest interactive depositories of memetic content”, where it is characterised as a “FAIL” meme (Shifman, “Memes” 364). Michele Zappavigna writes that the “FAIL” meme originated from a 1998 Japanese home console game called “Blazing Star” in which, after losing a level, a player is faced with the words “You fail it!” (153). In an article for *Slate* magazine, Christopher Beam speculates about the significance of the “FAIL” meme’s popularity as a dedicated website – “Failblog” – was created at the beginning of 2008. Beam writes that the “FAIL” meme “changes our experience of schadenfreude”: “What was once a quiet pleasure-taking is now a public – and competitive – sport”. Beam also notes the spike in Google searches for “FAIL” memes concurrent with the acceleration of the mortgage crisis in 2008. For instance, when former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and former Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson testified before the Senate in September 2008, a demonstrator in the audience held up a sign reading “FAIL” (Beam). The “FAIL”, then, is both a playfully mocking element of a game and also has the potential to respond to catastrophic world events. Most of the memes in the “Robert Green FAIL” series share a similar form: Green’s body is cropped and added to an array of photographs depicting famous or infamous events or situations. Nestled amongst them is Drew’s falling-body image (Figure 2.12).

The word “meme” was coined by evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 as a shortened form of the Greek word “mimeme”, meaning “imitated thing”, to describe the propagation of “tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches” (192). Memes, Dawkins writes, should be considered as “living structures”:

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from

brain to brain via a process which ... can be called imitation ... When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme's propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of the host cell. (192).

This model of the virus, however, precludes any human engagement or control, becoming especially insufficient to describe the proliferation of Internet memes. As Henry Jenkins et al stress “the viral metaphor does little to describe situations in which people actively assess a media text, deciding who to share it with and how to pass it along” (20).²¹ Bradley Wiggins and G. Bret Bowers make the distinction between “media virality” and Internet memes. “Viral media”, they write, “can be viewed as a form of spreadable media, yet one which has enjoyed massive popularity over a distinct period of time” whereas Internet memes “persist due to the dynamic interaction among members of participatory digital culture” (1892). Similarly, on the use of the word “viral” to describe the circulation of memes, Whitney Phillips takes issue with the claim that the word meme “always precludes active engagement”. She continues that memes are not passive, and nor do they “follow the model of biological infection” but instead those that create memetic content see memes “as microcosmic nests of evolving content” (“Defence”). “Internet memes”, writes Ryan Milner, “depend on collective creation, circulation, and transformation” (14). The circulation of the Internet meme, then, requires that audiences participate as both producers and consumers, playing an active role in the circulation and re-interpretation of memetic content (Jenkins et al 21)

Limor Shifman, who has written extensively on memetic content, describes Internet memes as “a group of digital items that: (a) share common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance; (b) are created with awareness of each other; and (c) are circulated, imitated,

²¹ Dawkins himself recognises the transformation of the word “meme” as it is used in Internet culture: “Instead of mutating by random chance, before spreading by a form of Darwinian selection, internet memes are altered deliberately by human creativity. In the hijacked version, mutations are designed – not random – with the full knowledge of the person doing the mutating.” (Marshmallow Laser Feast).

and transformed via the internet by multiple users” (Shifman, “Logic” 341). As these items are circulated, they encourage “user-created derivatives” and create “a shared cultural experience” (Shifman, “Memes” 362, 367). Wiggins and Bowers describe the creation of an Internet meme as an ongoing conversation between web users “where their contribution might be noticed and remixed further” (1895). Phillips writes that for creators, the meme “taps into a previously shared experience and is subsequently integrated into the collective subcultural fabric” and is then remixed and recirculated, creating further threads for this fabric (Phillips, “Mapping” 31). In a similar fashion to Wiggins and Bowers, and Phillips, Milner also calls the creation of memetic content a “public work” that “combines words, images, audio, and video into buzzing, vibrant conversation” whereby “new conversational threads” are created and “new texts become recognisable strands that are in turn woven into new conversations as participants see fit” (15). Like the conspiracy forum, the meme as a vernacular form of expression on the web is an open-ended practice that implicates the user him- or herself within the ongoing creation of meaning for the falling-body photograph and draws a line (or thread; or strand) into the future. As a framing narrative for the falling-body image, the Internet meme entangles the image in an ongoing conversation potentially far removed from the attacks.

Three key groups are clearly identifiable in the “Robert Green FAIL” series. The first features Green in photographs of other unfortunate sporting events, for example, when Steve Bartman attempted to catch a foul ball during the 2003 World Series and supposedly lost the game for the Chicago Cubs. Green is also featured failing to save the shot from Michael Jordan that won the 1998 NBA finals for the Chicago Bulls (Figure 2.13). These memes clearly share the same idea as the original photograph: Green fails to catch a ball. The second group of images is oriented towards pop culture as Green appears in photographs with Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift and Kanye West, as well as in front of O. J.

Simpson's Bronco during the famous police chase (Figure 2.14). Although, once again, the joke here is that Green could not prevent various unfortunate moments, there is also a sense that nothing could have saved these celebrities from making mistakes. As Shifman writes of the "Pepper-Spraying Cop" meme, when the figure is used in pop culture contexts, "the original meaning of the photo as a criticism of Pike [the police officer] seems to almost be reversed" ("Memes" 372).²² Similarly, these "Robert Green FAIL" memes not only highlight Green's perceived ineptitude but, perhaps even more so, also point towards and mock the absurdity of celebrity culture. The threads of memetic creation have moved beyond a specific sporting context as the meme itself evolves and users join in the conversation.

How did Drew's photograph become enmeshed with Green's misfortune? The answer to this question seems to rest in the final group of memes in the series, which demonstrate an awareness of culturally and politically significant events, namely a series of significant deaths and disasters. Like the *Sunday Times* quip about the oil spill, one of the most timely memes in this series involves the explosion at the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, as well as another image of a graph depicting BP's resulting plummeting share price, with Green able to save neither the rig nor the falling shares. Other historical tragedies inspire further "Robert Green FAIL" memes: the Boston Massacre of 1770, the sinking of the Titanic, the assassination of JFK (and the subsequent assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald), the planes crashing into the WTC and, of course, a person falling from the WTC. Memes like the "Robert Green FAIL" can be described as "reaction Photoshops": "collections of edited images created in response to a small set of prominent photographs" (Shifman, "Logic" 343). One such reaction Photoshop meme, "The Tourist Guy", started as a widely circulated photograph of a man on the observation deck of the WTC on 11 September as the first plane headed towards the

²² The "Pepper-Spraying Cop" meme refers to an incident at University of California, Davis in 2011 when Police Lieutenant John Pike was photographed using pepper spray on a group of students participating in a peaceful Occupy Wall Street protest ("Casually Pepper Spray Everything Cop").

towers, which was subsequently uncovered as a fabricated image created as a joke between friends. Like the “Robert Green FAIL”, versions of “The Tourist Guy” placed him in the midst of various disasters, both real and fictitious: in the car with JFK before he was shot, at the sinking of the *Titanic*, in Columbine High School, as well as in films *Independence Day* and *The Matrix* (“Know Your Meme: 9/11 Tourist Guy”). In both cases, the connecting thread through both series is the distinctive, and resultantly disjunctive, features of each man: Green awkwardly stretched out; the Tourist Guy’s hat and backpack.

Shifman writes that in the case of the Titanic meme in “The Tourist Guy” series, “audiences’ familiarity with the depicted iconic moments (in this case the tragic story and the image of a sinking ship) facilitated a strong comic juxtaposition between the familiar and the invented” (“Logic” 344). In the summer of 2010, the image of Green failing to save a goal and Drew’s photograph would have been familiar to a particular audience, but the comedy exists in the “sharp incongruity” between these two elements when they are together in the frame (Shifman, “Logic” 344). The falling-body image is drawn into a narrative of topical humour. Further, the origin of the “FAIL” meme is at once private and playful, and aware of public events; it is both a (usually) harmless joke at the expense of another and a statement of public attentiveness. The inclusion of news photographs like Drew’s image within a series of “FAIL” memes is, then, appropriate. Gone is the sporting context where Green fails to save a ball but, like the infamous misfortunes in the celebrity photographs, these memes have been created with an awareness of significant events in which the WTC attacks and Simpson’s Bronco chase, for instance, are entangled in an unforeseen narrative. With increasing hyperbole, Green’s failure is emphasised by easily recognisable photographs of misfortune, disaster and death. Almost acting as a forerunner to the cartoon in the *New York Post* in 2014 that Junod criticises as shameful and exploitative, this meme demonstrates that Drew’s photograph has, in some cases, become just another recognisable image like the *Titanic*

sinking or JFK assassination. Furthermore, far from being a sacred memorial to all the 9/11 victims, the meme demonstrates that it is now possible to joke about this image.

Memes are, Shifman writes, “inherently oriented towards the future” and “designed to elicit future versions” (“Logic” 354). In a similar fashion to Birchall and Knight’s work on conspiracy theories as an uncontainable line reaching into the future, Shifman observes that photographs are increasingly positioned as “the raw material of future images” and “once a photo is shot, numerous offspring are waiting in its imagined womb” (“Logic” 354). The question to ask of this process is “[w]hat will its [the photograph’s] next version be?” (Shifman, “Logic” 354). Shifman’s question is deeply evocative of Pink’s guide to researchers to ask what an image is “*accompanied and intertwined* with as it is produced and consumed” (“Sensory” 12). Even traumatic photographs like the “Falling Man” are not just the finished product or representation, but the raw potential for further images and responses, which include jokes and conspiracies as much as memorialisation projects. Junod proposed that his “Falling Man” is a monument for all the victims of the attacks, and a window through which to see the world after the attacks; “we are all falling men now”, he tells us (“Falling (Mad) Man”). In a participatory culture that produces and circulates purposefully manipulated images, however, where individuals create their own versions of famous photographs, securing the photograph’s place in the world and stabilising its meaning become increasingly problematic. Rather than being demonstrative of the centrality of the falling-body photograph within “collective memory”, the work of users on “Clues Forum” and “Know Your Meme” attest to the contradictory threads of participation, the bringing together of the previously unrelated, that knot together as we continue to grapple with the falling body, and the event itself (Muntéan, “Naming” 105).

2.4 Finding the Images: Online Scrapbooks and Carolee Schneemann

2.4.1 *Collecting Stories: “NYC Stories” and “here is new york”*

Erika Doss confronts the growing number of memorials in America with her concept of “memorial mania”, what she terms “an obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent desire to express and claim those issues in visibly public contexts” (2). According to Doss, memorial mania “does not rest on a coherent, collective, or even consensual ideological framework” and many contemporary memorials are “marked by conflict, rupture, and loss and by a recognition among artists and audiences that memorials have the power to stir things up as much as smooth them out” (47). Memorial mania is, then, messy. “Wer Is Myki” and “Rim Country”, as well as “Clues Forum” and “Know Your Meme”, testify to the ways web users have an irrepressible urge to document, remember, scrutinise and play with the falling-body image in contradictory ways and in direct contrast, it seems, to mainstream media. As Doss continues, memorial mania “is less convinced of a seamless – or shared – American historical narrative”; instead “[c]ontemporary American commemoration is increasingly disposed to individual memories and personal grievances”, as well as challenges to the memorialisation in the first place (48). Junod’s succession of articles on Drew’s photograph, and his authoritative writing style, have an appearance of a seamless and a shared experience. After all, *we* have known who the falling man is all along (“The Falling Man) and *we* are all falling men now (“Falling (Mad) Man”). But the representation of the falling-body photograph on web memorials, conspiracy forums and meme sites demonstrate multiple personal encounters with the photograph, a distrust towards conventional media to adequately memorialise the falling-body image and a desire to question the photograph as a document of the attacks and a sacred object. By enacting a digital access to intimacy, these sites both handle and manipulate the falling-body photograph, and “make it known” in their own particular ways.

In the initial months after the attacks, several public projects also began documenting widespread individual experiences of the terrorist attacks, providing a digital access to intimacy to the falling bodies by making them known in public spaces. Artist David Vanadia decided to create a self-proclaimed “historical document” called “NYC Stories” by collecting stories of personal experience in order to record the rawness of that day (“NYC Stories”). Vanadia explains that the motivation for the project stemmed from the observation that, a few weeks after the attacks, “conversations began to shift back to everyday things” and thus “[m]emories diminish over time and eventually disappear” (“NYC Stories”). In the aftermath, Vanadia created posters and “papered lower Manhattan” to encourage New Yorkers to share their stories (“NYC Stories: 2001”). In a similar fashion to the creators of “Wer Is Myki” and “Rim Country”, Vanadia’s project is founded on a fear of experience disappearing. What appears on the site vacillates between emotional first-person witness and what Vanadia terms “folklore”. This second aspect of the “document” is a miscellany of jokes, conspiracies, stories that turned out to be false, as well as poems and thoughts emailed to Vanadia. For example, a picture of a \$20 note folded in a particular way that seems to “predict” that the two towers would collapse (Figure 2.15), versions of “The Tourist Guy” meme and a story about Jackie Chan having plans to film at the WTC on 11 September (“9/11 Archive”). Further, there is a tab entitled “My 9/11” which features a video filmed by Vanadia on his camcorder on the day of the attacks, including the towers collapsing and the aftermath of dazed survivors and huge piles of charred paper (“My 9/11”).

One of these stories, originally published in February 2002, addresses the people jumping from the towers. When Brooklyn resident Colby Buzzell heard that a plane had flown into the WTC, he grabbed his camera and made his way to the site. He was stood a “couple of blocks away” when he saw people starting to jump:

I saw a shirtless man jump out from one of the top floor windows ... I watched him fall all the way down ... and I actually felt the thump of his body hitting the ground, and heard the thump echo down the surrounding alleys and streets ... When I started to take more photos of the WTC towers on fire I observed what I thought was [sic] pieces of the building falling down, but then when I took a closer look I noticed it was people jumping out ... If you look closely at the first photo, inside the red circle is a person falling from a window ... I seriously lost track of how many people I saw jump to there [sic] death ... Its [sic] hard to tell but if you looked closely at a couple of them you can clearly see people jumping out of the windows. (“NYC Stories: Colby Buzzell”).

Buzzell demonstrates his proximity to the event through his description of those jumping: he sees, hears and feels the bodies fall. Not only does Buzzell have to take a “closer look” to distinguish between debris and bodies, but he then invites the reader to look “closely” at his photographs. These images are not available on the current version of Vanadia’s website, although Buzzell’s account makes it apparent that they were sent in with his writing. Like the journeys of Drew and Kleinfield, Buzzell relates how he had to walk back to Brooklyn with his camera. Buzzell’s contribution, posted eighteen months before the publication of Junod’s article, documents those who fell from the towers within an archive that does not seek to exploit or sensationalise these stories. The falling bodies are, instead, located in a document that aims to preserve the intimate experiences of that day.

New media scholar Joanna Zylińska writes that any archive “is born out of a fundamental recognition of transience, of the passage of time, and thus also of ... liquidity” (144). In language reminiscent of Ingold’s meshwork, she writes that the “*inherent liquidity of culture*” is a model “for understanding cultural objects as permanently unfixed and unfixable” (141). Zylińska explains that cultural objects like photographs in family albums, on sharing sites like Flickr or in “‘found-image’- based art projects” can “apply cuts to this flow” and provide a “safe space for exploring the liquidity of culture without drowning in its fast-moving waters” (144, 150). Similarly, Vanadia’s “document” applies a cut by collecting stories and miscellaneous items, and making them “available for free” in one place, thus attempting to still the flow of experience through the meshwork, and prevent the return to

“everyday things” (“NYC Stories: 2001”). Although “NYC Stories”, like the 9/11 web memorials, is founded on an anxiety that certain images or stories will gradually slip away, and will at some point become inaccessible, there has already been some sense of slippage on Vanadia’s site: where are Buzzell’s photographs? As Zylinska proposes, the need to “archive, to store things, to repeat, to remember” is shadowed by its opposite: letting things slip out of the archive and leaving a hole in the document (150). Buzzell’s story, a pause in the flow of information, is nonetheless a vantage point to investigate the liquid flow of culture. His photographs, wherever they are, are beyond Vanadia’s “historical document” in its present form, beyond the confines of his archive as it evolves. The falling-body image, as a cultural object, cannot be held by one particular framing narrative as the meaning of the photograph continues to evolve through multiple instances of production and consumption, even to the point where the image begins to elude our grasp.

Similar slippages are apparent on the website of another project entitled “here is new york: a democracy of photographs”, an impromptu exhibition of photographs and memorial of the event. The exhibition started when Michael Shulan, who went on to become the creative director for the 9/11 Memorial Museum, placed a photograph of the WTC that he had purchased just a few weeks prior to the attacks in the front window of vacant shop in SoHo, just two miles from the site of destruction. When people started noticing the photograph, Shulan and three colleagues decided to allow others to send in their own photographs (“Guide to ‘here is new york’ Collection”). The photographs ranged in subject matter from the towers themselves (before, during and after the attacks), firefighters and rescue workers, distressed witnesses and survivors covered in dust, temporary memorials and missing posters. Most of the photographs have an obvious visual connection to the towers, others such as a blurred image of a man’s shoe or three people sat around a table wearing air pollution masks are more arbitrary (“Gallery: here is new york”). In the makeshift gallery in

SoHo, physical copies of photographs were scanned, assigned image numbers and then returned to their owners. Volunteers printed copies, mounted them on white card and then, without framing them or naming the photographer, the photographs were hung on the walls and suspended from the ceiling. Images from amateur and professional photographers were hung side by side without distinction (“Guide to ‘here is new york’ Collection”). In December 2001, the team launched a website to offer an online gallery and take orders for prints remotely. In November 2007, following several satellite exhibitions all over the world, “here is new york” dissolved as a non-profit organisation, having donated \$875,000 to charity (“Guide to ‘here is new york’ Collection”).

In an interview for New York University in May 2002, Charles Traube, one of the co-founders of the project, asserts that from the beginning, they had the “notion about making it digital” by scanning the photographs, keeping track of data and selling images:

It’s a click-and-buy site. You can scan in on each picture and get a detailed blow-up of it. There are over 5,000 images on that website. We want the website to be a resource center. *If we fold, the website will stay alive.* It allows us to resurrect for whatever else it might be. And that’s where the virtual technology serves the analog world. *The website can last forever.* (Interview by Abrash and Ginsburg, emphasis added).

Like Vanadia’s vision for “NYC Stories”, Traube imagines that the website will be an eternal archive of the project but the reality is markedly different. Many tabs on the site, including the “Victims” and “Comments” sections, have been disabled, and there is no longer an option to purchase photographs online as a result of reduced staff on the project (“Contact”). Almost 3000 thumbnails of the photographs are still available as a permanent reminder of the project, and of the sheer volume of images received by the organisation, but they cannot be enlarged. One of these thumbnail photographs is David Surowiecki’s photograph of people jumping out of the north tower, which seems to be the only falling-body photograph (Figure 0.4). The fact that the website has started to disintegrate is telling of Zylinska’s proposition of the liquidity

of culture. What Traube and his co-founders considered to be a permanent resource of photographs is gradually becoming unavailable. Unlike the *New York Times*, AP and *Esquire* digital archives that provide thorough documentation of their material, these sites demonstrate the unrelenting flow of the meshwork of images.

Fortunately, there is a resource that documents and provides access to prior versions of both websites, an archive for these archives. The Internet Archive is a non-profit organisation founded in 1996 with a mission to preserve digital artefacts and a goal of establishing “universal access to all knowledge”, applying a cut to the flow of information (“Internet Archive: Frequently Asked Questions”). Firstly, a version of “NYC Stories” from October 2004 reveals that Buzzell’s story also appeared as an article in *Breakout*, a punk and hard-core music magazine, in October 2001. Buzzell’s article features the photographs he referred to in the version of his story on Vanadia’s website, including two images with red circles drawn around someone falling from the tower (Buzzell) (Figures 2.16 and 2.17). Secondly, the Internet Archive also allows access to earlier versions of the “here is new york” site. Although some of the photographs in the “Victims” tab are still unavailable, Surowiecki’s photograph is accessible (Figure 2.18). Junod briefly mentions the project in “The Falling Man” as evidence for the way images of the falling bodies were excised from mainstream media footage:

In *Here Is New York*, an extensive exhibition of 9/11 images culled from the work of photographers both amateur and professional, there was, in the section titled “Victims,” but one picture of the jumpers, taken at a respectful distance; attached to it, on the *Here Is New York* Web site, a visitor offers this commentary: “This image is what made me glad for censoring in the endless pursuant media coverage”.

Through the Internet Archive, the “Comments” section for Surowiecki’s photograph is once again readily available. The comment Junod quotes is there but what he does not mention is that the title of the quote is “Forever with me”. Far from a condemnation of the image, this comment is a result of personal gratitude for not having to see people die in this way.

Furthermore, other visitors post comments that express a connection with, and even an awe of, the photograph: “This is the picture that stays with me from that dreadful day”; “I think they look like birds flying up to heaven [sic]”; “I cannot imagine how desperate and brave you were to feel that this was [the] only way out” (“Comments: Image 1484”). These comments certainly complicate Junod’s argument that the falling-body photographs were only met with disgust or perverse enjoyment on the Internet.

A further touching response to the photograph, heavy with religious symbolism, is the first comment entitled “Flight”. The visitor writes: “Here is what I hope ... that you felt ... not terrifying, cold descent, but the warm, gentle caress of your Creator’s infinitely perfect hand. And in your mind, and in your heart, and in your soul, you knew that you were not falling, but instead soaring” (“Comments: Image 1484”). This comment is reminiscent of “The Falling Man” when Junod writes “[m]aybe he didn’t jump at all, because no one can jump into the arms of God. Oh, no. You have to fall”. Although it is the only falling-body photograph on the website, it was not the object of disgust that Junod’s writing seems to imply. Instead, commenters responded to such a photograph in ways similar to Junod. Whereas Junod asserts that web users were only interested in the gruesome aspects of the falling bodies, framing the falling-body image with autopsy photographs and execution videos, “NYC Stories” and “here is new york” frame the falling-body photograph within narratives of collecting, preserving and paying tribute to these elements of the attacks. Like “Wer Is Myki” and “Rim Country” but on a much larger scale, these digital projects demonstrate the desire to document those who fell from the towers, in first-person witness and in second-hand photographic form (neither project keeps the “original” photographs). These projects also testify to the liquidity and flow of the meshwork of falling-body images as they ripple outward, spreading beyond mainstream media framings such as Junod’s article, and almost disappearing before being caught by another mechanism of preservation. As

framing narratives for the falling-body image, these projects, like the web memorials, are the result of a need to preserve not just the falling body itself but the engagements and interventions of civilians and photographers. These projects open up the discussion of the photograph to include the way the event, through the falling-body photograph, unfolds and touches a wide variety of people.

2.4.2 Drawing Her Body: Carolee Schneemann and the Falling-Body Image

“Carolee Schneemann’s unique contribution to art history, and to painting in particular,” writes contemporary art historian Kristine Stiles, “has been literally to *draw* the eye back to the body that sees: both to the body’s inextricable connection to what is seen and to its role in determining the nature of the seen” (11). Theatre and performance critic Rebecca Schneider explores the presence of the “explicit body” in Schneemann’s work. The phrase “explicit body”, Schneider explains, is a means of discovering how the artist “aims to explicate bodies in social relation”, with the words “explicit” and “explicate” both stemming from the Latin *explicare*, meaning “to unfold” (2). “Unfolding the body”, she continues, “as if pulling back velvet curtains to expose a stage, the performance artists ... peel back layers of signification that surround their bodies like ghosts at a grave ... they are interested to expose not an originary, true, or redemptive body, but the sedimented layers of signification themselves” (2). Like the significance of Drew, Kleinfield and Junod’s bodies in the production and framing of the falling-body photograph, Schneemann’s extensive body work is a key framing narrative for understanding the presence of the falling-body image in *Terminal Velocity* and *Dark Pond*. In contrast, of course, to the bodies of Drew, Kleinfield and Junod, Schneemann’s body and creative force are “*explicitly female*” (Schneider 36). As choreographer and media artist Johannes Birringer writes, Schneemann’s practice “recovers” the erotic and kinetic female body as a “source of knowledge” (44). As such, she makes an

explicitly female intervention into the falling-body image, and makes that intervention itself explicit by exposing the process of meaning-making in her work.

In response to the terrorist attacks, Schneemann presented two works directly inspired by images of people falling from the WTC. *Terminal Velocity* (Figure 2.3) and *Dark Pond* (Figure 2.4) are comprised of scanned newspaper photographs of several people caught in mid-fall, Drew's photograph amongst them. *Terminal Velocity* features seven images of falling bodies gradually enlarged in six stages. In the case of three of the images, including Drew's photograph, the final sections of the grid confront us with falling bodies that almost completely fill their frames. *Terminal Velocity* was originally exhibited at the Elga Wimmer Gallery in New York on 12 October 2001, and also in the October 2001 issue of *PORES*, a web journal for poetics research. The full statement accompanying the work in the journal is as follows:

This photographic grid as eulogy. Scanned sequences of images consecrate nine people – among the hundreds – falling to their inescapable deaths. The computer process allows intimate contact with each horrific isolation in the desolate shifting space. In this communal nightmare, fleeting visual attributes of nine lives become clearer by enlargement. Our own vertiginous grief, rage and sorrow envelop each frame, each fragment of photographic evidence – unexpectedly captured, made public. These enlargements personalize nine people, who in their normal work day were thrown by impact into a gravitational plunge, or chose to escape incineration by leaping into space. (*Terminal Velocity*).

What is clear from Schneemann's description of her process is the close and tactile relationship between artist and material, image and viewer. Kenneth White calls the incremental magnification in *Terminal Velocity* a "brutal prism", refracting these desperate falls into separate strands ("Carolee Schneemann: Terminal Velocities"). Perhaps, however, we can consider Schneemann's body as a gentle prism in what Schotzko calls her digital access to intimacy. The artist herself is a component in the computer process, placing her body into and onto the photographs as she scans them, and seeing with the tactile surfaces of her own body.

In an interview with Allison Oddey, Schneemann explains of her practice: “There are areas of imagining that I can only position by putting myself physically in the middle of an idea. I have to inhabit that imagery and its potentiality” (157). Here, too, in *Terminal Velocity*, Schneemann situates herself within the image, both consuming the photographs and producing her own response through her “corporeal practice” (Pink, “Sensory” 11). Her description of “[o]ur own vertiginous grief”, a resulting “fall” for the viewer in response to the falling-body image, recalls Drew tracking the person as they fell from the tower with his camera, performing a kind of fall himself (qtd. in Stern). Just as the photographer’s “falling” body is directly implicated in the production of the image, Schneemann’s “falling” body, and by extension our own “falling” bodies, are implicated in this consumption of, and intervention into, the falling-body image. This responsive “fall” is not the same as Junod’s statement that we are all falling men, or that we have known who the falling man is all along, but that in falling through and with these images, we also fall closer to them (“The Falling Man”, “Falling (Mad) Man”). The “fragment of photographic evidence” entangled with personal feelings of pain and anger finds a parallel with Mike Rambousek’s audio-visual collage that interweaves photographs from the attacks within a new narrative of his son’s life (“*Terminal Velocity*”). *Terminal Velocity*, like Rambousek’s collage, is a staging of an encounter and the extending of an invitation to the viewer to look closer and see the falling body within an extended narrative that includes life, even as the subjects of the work fall to death.

The inclusion of the moving human body within her practice can be found in Schneemann’s work from the very beginning of her career. Schneider writes that one of Schneemann’s earliest performances, entitled *Environment for Sound and Motions* (1962), involved performers making “lists of possible actions, positions, and interactions with props, with each other, and with the audience”, and then each performer “carried out the actions

with a different rhythm and cadence”, therefore staging an “encounter between these cadences, rhythms, and a variety of objects, gestures, and sounds” (32). Another performance, *Newspaper Event* (1963), in which dancers were assigned specific body parts from which to source their energy for the performance, engendered a sense of “plasticity, a kind of nervous system of bodies in interaction” (Schneider 33). Following these performances, Schneemann then inserted her own body into the performance space in infamous pieces *Eye/Body* (1963) and *Meat Joy* (1964). In both pieces, her naked body covered in various materials including paint, chalk and various meat products, Schneemann becomes both image and image-maker, and indicates the presence of a “bodily eye ... not only in the seer, but in the body of the seen” (Schneider 35). Schneemann’s earliest work is founded on a fascination with the kinetic potential of the body within a mesh of interrelated movements, people and objects. The body in motion sets out the rhythm from which the performance moves outwards into the audience, encouraging an encounter or interaction between multiple bodies. The resulting pieces brought this interaction to the surface, making the process an integral element of the performance.

Although *Terminal Velocity* and *Dark Pond* are not performance pieces in the sense of *Eye/Body* and *Meat Joy*, Schneemann herself considers all her work to be the result of a painterly gesture: “I’m still a painter and I will always be in essence a painter ... Painting doesn’t have to mean that you’re holding a brush in your hand ... It might be your own body, that when you go inside the frame ... you see that the materiality of what you’re working with might include yourself” (qtd. in Serra and Ramey 103). In her work, Schneemann’s explicitly female body is the source of momentum and power from which her art unfolds. To this end, Birringer continues that Schneemann always professed to be a “painter who paints with her body, words, and extended structures in space and so her work “must be seen in relation to the material and formal choices she makes to explore kinetic and temporal

processes in the enactment of imagemaking, *drawing her body into the extended forcefields* of the media she interweaves, interpolates and simultaneously subverts and supersedes” (44, 34, emphasis added). Schneemann’s work is processual, enacting the process of making the image with her body and the media she uses. Paint is, for Schneemann, an extension of the body, and the body’s relationship to its environment and to the materials of the particular piece, allowing the body to intervene in the image-making process. For our understanding of her work concerning the falling-body image, the drawing of her own body into the process of image-making complicates Junod’s universalised and gendered representation of Drew’s photograph. Schneemann is not a falling man and she may not know who the falling man is, instead she offers a framing of the image that entangles with the distinctly female body, thus further opening up the possibilities for the image and the response to the event.

In a similar fashion to *Terminal Velocity*, *Dark Pond* features a grid pattern with twelve panels of falling-body images. Unlike *Terminal Velocity*, however, Schneemann has annotated the images in crayon and watercolour: bursts of colour that disrupt the black and white scanned photographs. Ilka Scobie writes that the additions to the photographs embellish “the figures with a kinetic and appalling beauty. Colored splashes explode and fade into toxic clouds floating in the 9/11 dusk. Metal shards vaporize to molten hues of red and blue” (“Corporeal”). The chaotic colours are kinetically charged, altering the images, creating momentum and applying pressure. Especially in the case of Drew’s image, which has been noted for its enduring verticality and stillness, the horizontal blue brushstrokes and disordered green lines create contrasting planes of movement. With every smear of paint or crayon, *Dark Pond* enacts Schneemann’s bodily intervention into the falling-body image, “drawing her body” into the vertical trajectories of the fall by painting horizontal lines, circles, shapes resembling bodies, large patches of colour and frantic scribbles. In her analysis of both pieces, Schotzko asserts that because Schneemann’s body is so invested in her intervention,

the falling-body photograph is brought “into closer but less clear view”, therefore “undoing the potentiality for an intersubjective experience” because all we can see is “*Schneemann’s* experience” (55). “[T]he closer we try to get to what happened”, Schotzko asserts, either through magnifying the image or peering through the paint to see the falling body, “the more pixelated and blurred our own recollection becomes” (54). As Rambousek’s digital collages prove, however, the magnified and pixelated photograph can actually provide a space in which to feel close to the victims of 9/11, and also memorialise them through creating new narratives around their photographs. Schneemann’s method suggests a desire for proximity, a desire to touch and handle these images. Rather than obscuring the falling body, the magnified repetition in *Terminal Velocity* and the frenetic colour of *Dark Pond* invites the viewer to look closer at the tragedy and to draw their own bodies into this pixelated space.

Whilst Schotzko sees the “bodiedness of the image” slipping into the background of our experience, despite the “bodiedness” of Schneemann’s work, I suggest that *Terminal Velocity* and *Dark Pond* draw attention to the many bodies involved in the processes of meaning-making intersecting the falling-body image (56). As well as appearing in artworks and memorial projects, falling-body photograph were also documented on conspiracy theory websites and discussion boards. Whilst the memorial projects discussed in this chapter attempt to preserve the falling-body photograph, users of conspiracy theory websites seek to deny part, if not all, of the “reality” in the photograph. Both endeavours, however, used the falling-body image to furnish personal and idiosyncratic narratives. Similarly, both Schneemann and the users behind the “Robert Green FAIL” memes utilised computer processes for their work, indicating a desire to entangle the falling-body image within particular framing narratives, even as the motivations behind the resulting artefacts are markedly different. Far from being the sacred and totalising object at the end of Junod’s article, the touchstone for all individuals after the attacks, the falling-body photograph is

scrutinised, handled and manipulated, becoming something different for each individual or group with whom it comes into contact. As a framing narratives, each individual or group intervenes in the falling-body image, creating potentially endless lines of participation, conversation and debate without the possibility of resolution.

3. “[C]ompletely raw comes the memory”: Falling and Performing at the World Trade Center

3.1 “[T]he biggest tombstones in the world”; or a Brief History of the World Trade Center

In July 1962, small business owners in Downtown Manhattan’s Radio Row were facing eviction from the proposed site for the World Trade Center (WTC). They protested in the streets, proclaiming that “the Port Authority had no right to condemn private property for the center”, a project which they said would result “in profits for private individuals” (Asbury). In the protest procession, the demonstrators carried a black coffin through downtown streets with a life-size mannequin inside. On the side of the coffin a sign read: “Here Lies Mr. Small Businessman. Don’t Let the P.A. [Port Authority] Bury Him” (Pitzke). In January 1964, after lawsuits brought by these businessmen were decided in favour of the Port Authority and the WTC project, Minoru Yamasaki’s twin towers design was made public. One of the key details in the plans was the fact that they would be the tallest buildings in the world (Stengren). The sheer scale of the project angered another group of businessmen. This time a group of Midtown real estate operators contended that the proposed buildings would only provide ten million square feet of vacant office space in an area already saturated with vacant offices. Furthermore, many of these operators privately owned buildings in Manhattan, such as the Empire State Building, that were naturally subject to taxation, whereas the WTC would be built by the “tax-free Port of New York Authority” (Knowles). Unlike the initial opposition from small businessmen, these landlords “deal every day in millions, not thousands, of dollars” and they objected “only to the size of the project, not the basic idea or the location” (Apple). These opponents formed a “Committee for a Reasonable World Trade Center”, the director of which, lawyer Robert Kopple, asserted that the Committee was “ready to go to court to try to get this bloated project ... brought down to size” (qtd. in

Apple). In November 1965, the State Supreme Court rejected the Committee's contention that the WTC would "in effect, be unfairly competing with their privately owned buildings" ("Realty Group Loses Round"). In March 1966, demolition started on buildings in the sixteen-acre site designated for the towers ("Trade Center Razing Starts"). Construction of the north tower was completed in December 1970, with the south tower following in July 1971 ("Topping Out Through Cloud").

Architectural historian Benjamin Flowers writes that Lower Manhattan "was built on a foundation of cycles of eviction, destruction, and redevelopment that made and remade the urban landscape time and time again" (153). He details the history of what "world trade" actually means for the port and the city of New York. The New Amsterdam settlement established by the Dutch West India Company in the seventeenth century to "secure the company's claim to lower Manhattan" resulted in the displacement of Native American tribes and the first importation of African slaves (150). Slavery became even further entrenched in Lower Manhattan with the arrival of British warships and soldiers in 1664, and subsequent renaming of the area to New York (151). Before the emancipation of all slaves in New York State in 1827, the city had the largest urban population of slaves outside of the South (L. Harris, *Shadow* 3). "World trade in New York", Flowers states, "had its roots in systems of bondage and the goods produced under bondage" (151). Further, in 1991 a burial ground of some 20,000 enslaved and free African Americans was discovered less than a mile from the WTC (Flowers 152). Following the attacks, however, the contentious and violent history of the site had to compete with the sacralisation of "Ground Zero", a "burial ground ... of unique character" with few actual bodies to excavate from the site (Kilde 300). The site became a place where the dust was considered sacred (Sturken, "Tourists" 165).

As the construction of the towers began, architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable concluded her article "Who's Afraid of the Big, Bad Buildings?" with the following:

Who's afraid of the big, bad buildings? Everyone, because there are so many things about gigantism that we just don't know. The gamble of triumph or tragedy at this scale – and ultimately it is a gamble – demands an extraordinary payoff. The Trade Center towers could be the start of a new skyscraper age or the biggest tombstones in the world.

Much like the coffin of Mr. Small Businessman, the giant tombstones in the 1960s represented the death of a way of life, another change to the city skyline with unforeseeable consequences. After 2001, however, the tombstone towers signify death of a different kind: thousands of workers trapped inside the two buildings, and falling with them. Linking these two moments, then, is this wider history of bodies at the site: enslaved, displaced and destroyed. The space around the towers is thick with the ghosts of the past. As they were being built, the possibility of their destruction was fixed with every steel column to their steel skeletons. Further back in history, examples of violence, displacement and aggressive regeneration of Lower Manhattan abound, to the point that below the city lie the remains of slaves, bodies from which world trade at the site grew more powerful and more prosperous. Although vastly different in context, the discovery of bodies under the city recalls the body of Mr. Small Businessman through the way death occurs as a means of regenerating the site. “New York rises not from ashes, but from rubble”, Huxtable observes, “the death of the past [is] framed by the birth of the future” (“Ode to Manhattan”).

This thick, unruly and contentious space around the WTC is the central text for this chapter; how various bodies, including our own, navigate this space is the central question. The bodies I follow are different in many ways to the ones outlined above, but they also move through and draw out contesting notions of creation and destruction. Here, I confront the falling-body image through the interventions of Philippe Petit's wire-walk, and more specifically the representations of the walk both before and after the attacks, as well as the WTC BASE jumps of September 2013 and the GoPro footage of the jumps released the following year. These interventions help me build an impression of the WTC site as one of

intersecting paths of movement, of bodies falling, walking and floating. My understanding of space, influenced by the work of Tim Ingold, Sarah Pink and Doreen Massey, is one of intersecting lines in the meshwork in which bodies become entangled where the previously unrelated can find lines of relation. Here, I am not so much concerned with the relationship between bodies and the WTC site, or connecting these bodies to each other, but “with the relations along their severally enmeshed ways of life”, with the way these bodies move together to constitute the WTC as place (Ingold, “Bindings” 1807). In *Lines: A Brief History*, Tim Ingold writes that every place is a “knot in the meshwork”. The knot “does not contain life but is rather formed of the very lines along which life is lived. These lines are bound together *in* the knot, but they are not bound *by* it. To the contrary they trail beyond it, only to become caught up with other lines in other knots” (100). The WTC is one such knot in the meshwork, a collection of “stories-so-far” that might entangle with other bodies and other stories (Massey 130).

For this reason, I have decided to arrange my discussion of Petit around the sections on the BASE jumps as a way to document the ongoing creation and recreation of the meshwork at the WTC. Firstly, I explore the representation of the walk in newspapers and magazines both before and after the attacks to suggest that Petit’s walk is grounded in the physicality of the towers themselves, despite the height of the performance, and even once the towers had disappeared. With this in mind, I turn to James Marsh’s 2008 documentary *Man on Wire*, which revisits the planning and execution of the walk through interviews and re-enactments, and Colum McCann’s novel *Let the Great World Spin* from the following year, which uses Petit’s walk as a central fulcrum around which several stories intersect. I use these texts to investigate further the way Petit’s body and the falling body become entangled in their narratives. From here, I examine the WTC BASE jumps through their enmeshment with both narratives of creation and destruction through the body of James Brady: ironworker

on the new One World Trade Center and illegal BASE jumper from that same building. I also explore the thick mesh of intersecting bodies in which the WTC BASE jump videos participate to suggest that we move with the image through the online environment as the trajectory of the BASE jumpers entangles with the images of people jumping from the WTC in 2001. The final two sections of this chapter explore the WTC as a haptic space through WTC BASE jumper Andrew Rossig's GoPro video footage and Robert Zemeckis' 3D re-imagining of Petit's performance, *The Walk* (2015). Here, verticality becomes something that the viewer can touch and experience and, by extension, the experience of those who fell on 11 September 2001. As framing narratives, the wire-walk and the BASE jump point towards the thick space of bodies at the towers, and situate the viewer's body within this space.

3.2 “[T]he earth-bound man-in-black”: Representations of Philippe Petit's Wire-Walk

3.2.1 *The “Unfathomable Void”: Philippe Petit Between the Towers*

Just after 7:00 a.m. on Wednesday 7 August 1974, Philippe Petit stepped out onto the wire he had erected between the towers of the WTC with a group of accomplices. He walked and performed for forty-five minutes, kneeling, sitting and lying down on the wire, making eight crossings in total (Munteán, “Men” 190). He was subsequently apprehended by the police and later charged with disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing. These charges were later dropped in exchange for a free performance by Petit in Central Park (Truffaut-Wong).

“Death”, says Petit of the moment he steps onto the wire, “is very close” (qtd. in *Man on Wire*). “But what a beautiful death it would be”, writes Bryan Appleyard in his review of *Man on Wire*, “not the despairing plummet of one of those jumpers from the burning towers”. In its representation of an event that occurred twenty-seven years before the terrorist attacks, *Man on Wire* and every re-interpretation of Petit's walk in the years after the attacks must

deal in some way with the interaction of the walk with the fall. I argue that Appleyard's comment incorrectly separates these two moments when instead representations of Petit's walk after 9/11, including *Man on Wire*, navigate a more complicated and far messier space of entanglement.

To lend some context to the representations of the walk after 2001, I will first outline some of the ways that Petit's walk was discussed in the years before the attacks and in the initial aftermath of the destruction. In 1982, novelist Paul Auster described a walk from the same year between the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan, where Petit remains an artist-in-residence, and a building across the street: "I could see no more than the wire, Philippe, and the sky. *There was nothing else. A white body against a nearly white sky, as if free ...* Each time he sets his foot on the wire, Philippe takes hold of ... life and lives it in all its exhilarating immediacy, in all its joy" (259-60, emphasis added). Similarly, in a 1987 profile piece for the *New Yorker*, Gwen Kinkead describes Petit's 1986 performance in the cathedral: "[A] spotlight shot a beam ... picking out a white-sheathed figure in the air ... In the religious setting ... the mysterious sight was galvanic ... Suddenly, Petit leaped onto the wire ... Eighty feet in the air, the wire was too thin for the audience to see. For one chimerical moment, *he seemed to walk on air*, an angel released from gravity" (37-38, emphasis added). For Auster, everything else dissolves apart from Petit, the wire and the sky. For Kinkead, the wire disappears, and Petit walks in empty space. In both descriptions, there is an overwhelming sense of euphoria in the act of watching Petit walk. His white costume makes him seem like an angel, free from the constraints of gravity and the space surrounding him, until he almost disappears into the sky itself. The walk is transformational as Petit, walking in white, transcends the cathedral space.

During his twin towers walk, however, Petit wore black.²³ In his thesis on risk and high-wire walking, Paul Myrvold describes Petit's costume change in his performance piece "Concert in the Sky" in Denver in 1982. In the first act of the performance, the "man-in-black", a street performer riding a unicycle, reveals himself to the audience (49). During the second act, the man-in-black climbs the structure surrounding the performance space in pursuit of a flautist but finds he can only get to her by crossing the wire. Myrvold describes how "the earthbound juggler seizes the balance pole and ventures out onto the wire tentatively placing one bare foot slightly ahead of the other" (50-51). The third act "gives us a transformed Petit in a form fitting costume ... No longer the earth-bound man-in-black, he is now a godlike presence in white" (52). In an interview with Myrvold, Petit said of this transformation: "[F]or the first time in my life I projected two characters: one ... is me as a street juggler ... So I thought this character should meet the wire walker, the opposite, the man in the sky. *So all black in the street and then all white in the sky*" (qtd. in Myrvold 56, emphasis added). At the end of act three, the transformation is complete: "He leaves behind the earth-bound life of street artist to become the ethereal sky walker clad in white" (Myrvold 57). Within this colour logic, Petit's dark costume during his WTC walk suggests that he did not transcend the physical space of the towers and retained his "earth-bound" status despite being over 1000 feet in the air. His walk remains rooted to the towers themselves, becoming an integral part of the thick, unruly meshwork of bodies surrounding the site, including the falling bodies.

In May 1993, a sixteen-year old train enthusiast named Keron Thomas impersonated a subway driver by signing in at the 207th Street Yard in Upper Manhattan and taking control of a train for over three hours. Once apprehended, Thomas stood accused of felony reckless endangerment but was eventually given three years' probation (Perez-Pena). *Times* journalist

²³ In his memoir, *To Reach the Clouds*, Petit explains that he wore "black slippers" and "black pants" but that, after his black turtleneck sweatshirt fell from his bag, he had to wear a "dark gray v-neck sweater" (161-62).

Robert McGill Thomas Jr. took Thomas's exploit as a springboard for his ode to daredevilry in New York. Entitled "Lawbreakers We Have Known and Loved", Thomas Jr. begins his article with the following:

They walk where they're not supposed to walk. They climb where climbing is not allowed. They jump where they shouldn't jump, and, yes, they drive trains they have no business driving. They are daring and endearing fools who rush in where angels fear to tread, and when they do, it is generally the angels who lead the applause.

Here, as well as Petit and Thomas, Thomas Jr. refers to Owen Quinn, who skydived from the top of the north tower in 1975, and to George Willig, who climbed the south tower in 1977 using specially made clamps. In this New York before 9/11, but less than three months after the 1993 WTC bombing, Thomas Jr. states that Petit's walk transformed the WTC site into an "icon of derring-do". In a similar fashion to Auster's and Kinkead's descriptions of Petit's cathedral walks, Thomas Jr. suggests that Petit's walk, as well as these other dangerous exploits, somehow transformed the "laws of gravity", the laws of the land and even the land itself.

Following the attacks, several writers re-iterated the transformative power of Petit's walk on the towers themselves. On 13 September 2001, *New York Times* columnist David W. Dunlap made one of the first references to Petit after the towers had been destroyed. He observed that the apparent ugliness of the towers was not assuaged by their size but by the way the "place ... could be momentarily captured by fanciful gestures on a human scale". On 16 September writer Tony Hiss stated that the towers "were not instantly loveable or easily cherished buildings" as they seemed to be "oversized and inhumane". But, as they were completed, "a new round of slow, soft changes took hold". In both cases, Dunlap and Hiss cite Petit's walk as a key moment in the history of the towers. In 1977, three days after Willig's climb, the *Times* published a small piece praising the act and its influence on the building, using a similar rhetoric to these "slow, soft changes":

Mr. Willig's triumph over stone and steel resembles in quintessential form the crude impulse to carve one's initials on a tree or daub one's address on a subway car. But his achievement took a purer form. To the eye, the South Tower remains unchanged, unlike the trees and subway cars; but to the mind, it carries a new message, or many messages. ("Twas Willig Did Gyre and Gimble").

Within this rhetoric, although neither act physically altered the towers, Petit's walk and Willig's climb enacted a transformation in the way the towers were perceived by the public. When Petit is the "ethereal sky walker clad in white", he transcends the space around him, but when he is the earth-bound street performer in black 1000 feet in the air, he is as fixed to the building itself as Willig with his climbing clamps (Myrvold 57). Petit's WTC walk is inextricably entangled with the towers.

Just under a fortnight after the attacks, journalist and sportswriter Steve Rushin, writing for *Sports Illustrated*, quotes Petit speaking as if the towers still existed:

There is a spot in the observation deck where you can face the other tower and look down to the plaza below ... In recent years I would often stare out from that spot and have to convince myself ... that I had made that walk ... Because I was finding it unbelievable that for those minutes, years ago, I had been out there on a wire, dancing in the sky.

Petit's words seek to anchor his walk to the space between the towers, even though they no longer stand. This image of Petit thrusting his head over the edge of the building features in Kinead's article fourteen years earlier. She and Petit visited the same observation deck together, and Petit "peered over the edge ... 'Oh!' he shouted, and he turned around, eyes wide with ecstasy and triumph. 'When I stick my head out, *completely raw comes the memory!*'" (44, emphasis added). Similarly, again, Adam Higginbotham explains in his 2003 double article on Petit for *The Observer* that Petit already had a script for a cinematic rendition of his walk before the towers were destroyed. The film would open with Petit and his friend Francis Brunn, German juggler and financial backer for Petit's WTC walk, sitting together on this same observation deck. In Petit's planned script "[t]hey will *look out into the void: the unfathomable void*" (Higginbotham, "On top of the world", emphasis added). Then,

Brunn would tell Petit that he can hardly believe that walked there all those years ago. ““You know?”” Philippe would say, ““I cannot believe it either”” (Higginbotham, “Touching the void”). The “void”, rather than being empty, is actually saturated with the raw memory of Petit’s walk, and becomes, in Petit’s screenplay, the opening set for a reimagining of the walk.

As I have already discussed, geographer Doreen Massey contends that space must be considered “open”, and that in this “open, interactional space there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower ... relations which may or may not be accomplished” (11). Massey’s space is one of “loose ends and missing links” (12). The WTC, as Petit suggests, is “raw” with memories: that is to say, unhemmed and frayed, always unfinished and primed for further connections. After 9/11, commentators, authors, filmmakers and artists look into the empty space left by the towers, and see that it is not empty after all. For instance, there is no better example of this raw space saturated with intersecting lines of relation than the double-cover illustration for the *New Yorker* on the fifth anniversary of the attacks (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The first depicts Petit holding his balancing pole on a completely white background, whilst the second features this same figure high above Manhattan, the empty footprints of the towers below. Cover designer John Mavroudis documents the artistic process in his analysis of the end product on his personal website. One of Mavroudis’ initial cover designs comprised of just Petit’s black costume and balancing pole floating above the city “to reflect ‘everyone’” (Figure 3.3). Another saw a giant figure in black with a balancing pole *towering* over Manhattan, with his legs in the place of the WTC (Figure 3.4). Mavroudis’ final submission showed an aerial view looking down at Petit as he walks in “thin air” over the footprints of the towers (Figure 3.5). The magazine subsequently handed the design brief over to painter Owen Smith who produced the resulting covers (“Anatomy of a *New Yorker* Cover”).

In 2007, the magazine won Cover of the Year from the American Society of Magazine Editors who gave the following explanation for their choice:

For the five-year 9/11 anniversary cover, John Mavroudis' concept was to stay away from the surfeit of images that recall the horror and remember the wonder of Philippe Petit's 1974 tight-rope walk between the towers ... The two-part cover (a first for the *New Yorker*) is a memorial to the spirit of humanity and those who died there, and especially to *the man who did a perfect dive as he plunged to his death*. ("Best Cover Contest 2007 Winners & Finalists", emphasis added).

There is no doubt that the "man who did a perfect dive" is a reference to the figure in Drew's photograph whom Tom Junod describes as both "perfectly vertical" and like an "Olympic diver" ("The Falling Man"). Even though I disagree with this separation of horror and wonder, which I believe are entangled in Petit's walk as it navigates the thick space around the towers, the comments from the ASME suggest nonetheless that the walk resonates with the fall. As Mavroudis' discarded and successful designs demonstrate, Petit's walk in the "void" is entangled with the falling body in a confluence of narratives, bodies and trajectories that makes up the spatiality of the WTC. The empty space in the resulting cover is actually saturated with raw memories, moving bodies, and the enmeshment of "horror" and "wonder". In his own memoir of the walk, *To Reach the Clouds*, Petit describes "[t]he gods" in his feet that "know how not to hit the cable" (168). "They ask the feet to land on the steel rope", he continues, "in such a way that the impact of each step absorbs the swaying of the foot ... the feet answer by being gentle and understanding, by conversing with the wire-rope" (168). The connection of Petit's feet to the wire, and the wire to the towers, emphasises his "earth-bound" status, his physical connection to the towers, the space surrounding them and the bodies entangled in this mesh (Myrvold 57). If Mavroudis' cover can be considered a memorial for the person in Drew's photograph, it is because of this shared space of unfinished stories. This shared space, I will now suggest, informs the representation of Petit's walk in both the documentary film *Man on Wire* (2008) and Colum McCann's novel *Let the Great World Spin* (2009).

3.2.2 “The texture of the moment”: *Man on Wire* and *Let the Great World Spin*

In an interview with the BBC, James Marsh, director of the documentary *Man on Wire*, explains the absence of any direct references to the attacks in his film:

What Philippe did was incredibly beautiful ... It may have been illegal, but it was not in any way destructive ... It would be unfair and wrong to infect his story with any mention, discussion or imagery of the Towers being destroyed ... On a personal level, I was able to engage with this story and get over the appalling dimensions of that tragedy ... I think it is possible to enjoy those buildings for the duration of the film, hopefully without that enjoyment being too infected by an awareness of their destruction. (qtd. in N. Smith).

As Flowers has shown in his history of the site, however, the line between creation and destruction is not so easily maintained at the WTC. Similarly, in her analysis of *Man on Wire*, Ruth Mackay compares the opening shots of the construction of the WTC with the images of the ruins of the towers after the attacks. These shots, Mackay suggests, also reflect “the historical conditions of the New York skyline”: the cycles of demolition as “tall buildings were repeatedly torn down in order to create taller or more impressive structures” (12). The site has a rich, intricate history of destroyed buildings and isolated bodies. These opening shots of construction are also shown in split screen with photographs from Petit’s youth (Figures 3.6-3.10). Like the construction and destruction of the towers, these parallel “growing up” narratives share some visual rhymes: Petit fencing, his shadow visible, with an ascending steel beam and a shadow underneath; this same beam and shadow, running horizontally, with Petit crossing a river on ropes; Petit balanced on the ropes with a worker balanced precariously on the building; a large object being drawn upwards with Petit suspended on a rope in the act of climbing or abseiling; the sparks from a welding power supply and the white playing cards in Petit’s hands. Through these parallel narratives, the film not only suggests that the towers and Petit are destined to meet but also that their bodies are inextricably entwined.

In his exploration of the relationship between representations of Petit's walk after 9/11 and the falling-body image, Chris Vanderwees responds to Marsh's comments by asserting that it is "unthinkable how an image of the Twin Towers, let alone *Man on Wire*, might exist in the contemporary cultural climate ... without associatively reflecting traces of the terrorist attacks" ("Tightrope" 246). "The imagery and language associated with falling bodies", he continues, "encode representations of Petit's tightrope walk" despite the film's attempt to repress them ("Tightrope" 246). Operating as a "repressive fantasy", Vanderwees suggests, *Man on Wire* alludes strongly to the idea that Petit could have fallen with references to the danger of the performance and, crucially, to the moment Petit's sweater falls from the roof and his accomplices on the ground believe that it was the man himself, but inverts these allusions because nobody falls (243-45). Mackay, too, deduces from Marsh's words an "underlying anxiety to at once address and push away the horrific association of 2001" (10). Similarly, Hamilton Carroll asserts that the film "reclaims the symbolic space of the World Trade Center from the space of terror" ("Heist" 838). Although I concur that the film has a complex relationship with the 2001 attacks that is not appeased by Marsh's comments, I do not agree that the moments of the walk and the fall can be so easily isolated in order for one to reclaim, push away or repress the other. The way of understanding the film proposed by Mackay and Vanderwees positions the walk and the fall as nodes in a network, relying on a prior separation of these events which cannot exist in the meshwork model.

The film does not "reclaim" space but highlights the shared space for the walk and the fall. I suggest that, with the WTC as a knot in the meshwork of falling-body images, the language of infection, and of separation, does not do justice to the level of entanglement of the events. There is instead a mutual reframing, an unspooling of narrative thread, enabled by the raw space of the WTC, creating new narratives and stories by the intersection of bodies. My discussion of the site as a space of intersecting stories, the "coming together of the

previously unrelated” (Massey 141), opens up the potential to see beyond Mackay’s belief that the film summons then dispels the attacks, and replaces the collapse of the towers with Petit’s performance (12, 14). Echoing Mavroudis’ *New Yorker* design ideas, the opening sequence suggests that there is a material, cross-temporal enmeshment of Petit’s body with the site, during construction and after destruction. Petit’s wire-walk and the falling-body image are key elements in the ongoing creation of WTC as place. Unlike the concept of Ground Zero, which resonates “with the often heard claim that the world was radically altered by 9/11, that the world will never be the same”, the understanding of the WTC site through the entanglement of moving bodies indicates that the event continues to unfold, even after the towers have disappeared, entangling with other seemingly incongruous events (Kaplan 83).

In the film, as Petit is explaining the moment when he has one foot on the tower and one foot on the wire, a computer generated image of the “void” appears as if the camera is peering over the edge of the tower or Petit himself has thrust his head out (Figure 3.11). This vertical space, according to Mackay, is “the stage for transcendence”, a “communal transcendent experience which operates in contrast to the terrifying verticality of 11 September”, because this image summons the vertiginous feeling for the viewer “without involving the real possibility of falling” (16). My understanding of the vertical space at the WTC, however, indicates that Petit does not have to fall to engage with the meshwork of falling-body images. His black, earth-bound costume and the “gods” in his feet, entangle his performance in the ongoing creation of space and of narratives of moving bodies at the site. Although, as Mackay observes, one of Petit’s American accomplices explains in the film that the performance was transcendent, “beyond anything you could imagine” (16), Annie Allix, Petit’s girlfriend at the time, describes moments when Petit was “lying down up above” and when he “knelt down and saluted” (qtd. in *Man on Wire*). Lying down up above, Petit is

down when he is up: his body intricately tied to the WTC even as he walks 1000 feet in the air.²⁴ The two events, then, are more than just “interrelated” by the film’s articulation of a “riposte to, and displacement of, the events of 2001” (Mackay 17). The vertical space is not empty: it is thick with bodies falling, walking, climbing and watching that continues to exist even after the towers have gone.

The opening description of the walk in *Let the Great World Spin* attests to this thick space of movement, memory and bodies, a space that is shared by walker, crowd and reader:

Those who saw him hushed. On Church Street. Liberty. Cortlandt. West Street. Fulton. Vesey ... He stood at the very edge of the building, shaped dark against the gray of the morning. A window washer maybe. Or a construction worker. Or a jumper ... [I]t was the manshape that held them there, their necks craned, torn between the promise of doom and the disappointment of the ordinary ...

A charge entered the air all around the watchers and ... they turned to one another and began to speculate, would he jump, would he fall ... the voices rose to a crescendo, all sorts of accents, a babel, until a ... man ... roared into the distance: Do it, asshole!

There was a dip before the laughter, a second before it sank in among the watchers ... and then a torrent of chatter was released ... and it seemed to ripple all the way from the windowsill down the sidewalk, and along the cracked pavement to the corner of Fulton, down the block along Broadway, where it zigzagged down John, hooked around to Nassau, and went on, a domino line of laughter, but with an edge to it, a longing ... [T]hey really wanted to witness a great fall, see someone arc downward all that distance, to disappear from the sight line, flail, smash to the ground, and give the Wednesday an electricity ...

Way above there was a movement ... And then they saw it ... A body was sailing out into the middle of the air ... The body twirled and caught and flipped, thrown around by the wind. Then a shout sounded across the watchers... God ... it’s just a shirt ... It was falling, falling, falling, yes, a sweatshirt, fluttering ... the waiting had been made magical, and they watched as he lifted one dark-slippered foot, like a man about to enter warm gray water ... The air suddenly felt shared. The man above was a word they seemed to know, though they had not heard it before. Out he went. (3-7).

In the “Author’s Note”, Colum McCann writes that he has “taken liberties with Petit’s walk” but tries to “remain true to the *texture of the moment*” (351). This texture, I have suggested, is the result of the interweaving of the movements of various bodies: the dark body that might be a jumper and the watching bodies on the ground; the ripples of the chatter and laughter

²⁴ In “Walking in the City”, de Certeau describes seeing a poster on the 110th floor of the south tower which reads “*It’s hard to be down when you’re up*” (92).

moving horizontally along the streets around the towers and the wire strung horizontally between the towers; the falling and twirling sweatshirt that connects the point at the top of the towers and the space of the watchers below. Significant, too, in the context of this thesis are the street names: Drew photographed people falling from the towers at the corner of West and Vesey (qtd. in Stern). West and Vesey are also now the home of the Goldman Sachs building, and the point at which two of the WTC BASE jumpers reached the ground, as I will discuss in the next section. These links, the traces of former and future falls, create layers of weaving intersections around the WTC site.

Although Mackay asserts that *Man on Wire* ultimately alludes to the attacks even as the film attempts to overlap and supersede the events of 2001, she claims that *Great World* places “the wire-walk and the ‘towers disintegrating’ at opposite ends of a spectrum” (10). Similarly, in her dissatisfaction with the 9/11 novel, Elizabeth Anker proposes that in *Great World*, “Petit’s achievement excavates competing associations tethered to the World Trade Center in a former historical moment” and that the story “rewrites 9/11’s sociocultural meanings to entail not shame and defeat but instead buoyant optimism” (472). Contrastingly, however, Graley Herren writes of the novel’s opening scene that for a moment before “Petit soars as Flying Man”, the watchers “anticipate the death plunge of Falling Man” (175). This moment is, for Herren, a “*simultaneous intermingling of past and present*” indicating that there is “no nostalgic vantage point for viewing Flying Man without also seeing Falling Man” (175-76, emphasis added). What is at stake here is seeing the site as the result of intersections of narratives of destruction and regeneration articulated through the movements of various bodies rather than as “Ground Zero”, the site of rupture and sacred dust. As opposed to the attacks cutting the site off from its past, Petit’s walk continues to move through the raw, thick space surrounding the towers.

Consequently, the walk and the fall are not “competing associations” because they co-exist in the ongoing creation of place. The “intermingling of past and present” is what I consider to be an “active material practic[e]”, the making of links that occurs in the ongoing creation of the WTC as place (Massey 118). In McCann’s description, the space around the towers is like “gray water”. It is not “thin air”, in other words, but it has a palpable presence, saturated with the tension from the crowd and also the prospect of motion, both falling and walking. The voices *rise* to a crescendo before the laughter *sinks* into the crowd. This laughter also has a horizontal quality, rippling through the streets around the towers and anticipating Petit’s walk. In addition, this “domino line of laughter” has an “edge” of desire to witness a fall and see someone “arc downward”, a desire momentarily satisfied by the falling sweatshirt. The crowd “longing” for a fall and the communal upward glances, with the real prospect of such a fall provided by the sweatshirt, creates a space thick with vertical motion too. The combination of horizontal and vertical motion recalls N. R. Kleinfield’s article from 12 September in which he describes how “[d]ense plumes of smoke raced through the downtown avenues” after the towers collapsed, like the streets McCann lists at the beginning of his novel. Similarly, in his contribution to “NYC Stories”, Colby Buzzell describes hearing the “thump” of a falling body “echo down the surrounding alleys and streets” (“NYC Stories: Colby Buzzell”). That the air suddenly feels “shared” gestures towards Massey’s understanding of place as a “collection of interwoven stories”, their ongoing creation through the entanglement of movement across temporalities (119). The novel endorses this sense of place by the way its narratives ripple outwards from the walk to touch a multitude of lives and temporalities.

Sinéad Moynihan responds to Mackay’s comment about McCann’s novel by stating that “the novel itself does not uphold such a distinction between creation and destruction”,

despite what McCann himself also suggests (282).²⁵ For example, a photograph, attributed to amateur photographer Fernando Yunque Marcano in the novel but actually taken by Vic Deluca for the *New York Post*, of Petit walking with a plane in flight above him entangles the walk with the attacks twenty-seven years later (Figure 3.12) (Moynihan 285). In the final section of the novel, we are transported forward, passed September 2001, to October 2006 where Jaslyn, whose mother died in a car crash on the day of the performance, ruminates on this particular photograph:

A man high in the air while a plane disappears, it seems, into the edge of the building. One small scrap of history meeting a larger one. As if the walking man were somehow anticipating what would come later. The intrusion of time and history. The collision point of stories. We wait for the explosion but it never occurs. The plane passes, the tightrope walker gets to the end of the wire. *Things don't fall apart*. (325, emphasis added).

Vanderwees writes that the inclusion of this photograph within McCann's narrative "brings audiences to a place where 'things don't fall apart': where the towers still exist and where "nobody falls from the World Trade Center" ("Tightrope" 244-45). Vanderwees's conclusion of this part of the novel, however, neglects the language of entanglement here: scraps of history "meeting" each other; the walking man "anticipating" the fall and, most explicitly; stories colliding in the space between the towers. The novel does not present the WTC as a place where things *fall apart*, but where things *fall together*. Petit's walk intersects other movements at the towers from other temporalities, including the attacks, and other personal narratives, such as the death of Jaslyn's mother, in a similar fashion to Mike Rambousek's DVD montage that includes images of the attacks, family photographs as well as photographs of the perpetrators. These images are falling through a meshwork that entangles and implicates them in wider narratives expanding beyond the specific moment of the attacks. As

²⁵ In an interview with the National Book Foundation after he won the 2009 National Book Award for Fiction, McCann explains the inspiration for his novel: "What a spectacular act of creation, to have a man walking in the sky, as opposed to the act of evil and destruction of the towers disintegrating" (qtd. in McCann).

a binding rather than a boundary, the framing of the novel brings the walk and the fall together rather than holding them apart.

3.3 Phantoms of Progress, Ghosts of Destruction: The Freedom Tower BASE Jumps

3.3.1 “[O]n the thin edge of nothingness”: Jumping from the World Trade Center

In the early hours of Monday 30 September 2013, three men broke into the new One World Trade Center building, at that time still under construction, ascended to the rooftop and jumped. Seasoned BASE jumpers, Marko Markovich, James Brady and Andrew Rossig launched themselves from the roof, wearing GoPro helmet cameras to record their descent. Markovich went first and furthest, landing in Nelson A. Rockefeller Park adjacent to the Hudson River almost half a mile away. Brady landed at the corner of West and Warren Street, 500 yards from the WTC, and ran towards Vesey Street, where Rossig landed, less than 200 feet from the building (Sohn). According to then New York Police Department Commissioner Ray Kelly at a press conference later that day, two of the jumpers (Brady and Rossig) were captured on CCTV cameras outside the Goldman Sachs building on West Street at 3:07 a.m. (“Parachutist Duo Drop”). Again, the intersection of West Street and Vesey Street is where Drew stood to capture his falling-body photographs (Stern). At this point, according to an ABC report, police did not know where the parachutists had come from, or whether they had skydived from a plane or jumped from a building (“Parachutists Land”). Police contacted Markovich and Brady in the immediate aftermath of the jump as both men were known BASE jumpers but they denied having anything to do with the stunt (Fenton and Antenucci). After tracking cars in the area on CCTV, police discovered one of them belonged to Brady who also happened to be an ironworker on the building. They subpoenaed Brady’s phone records to triangulate his location at the time of the jump, and discovered that he was near the building. Brady had also made calls to Rossig during this period, pointing police in

his direction. Definitive proof came in January 2014, when searches of their homes, along with those of Markovich and suspected lookout Kyle Hartwell, presented GoPro camera footage of the three jumps from the top of the WTC (Daly).

On 24 March 2014, all four men surrendered to the 1st Precinct police station and their defence counsel decided to upload the footage of Brady's jump to YouTube, with Rossig's video following the next day and Markovich's in May. The jumpers initially faced charges of felony burglary, reckless endangerment and jumping from a structure (Sohn). This latter charge relates to 2008 legislation which made it unlawful to jump, climb or suspend oneself from a structure (New York City Council). The trial began 2 June and, eleven days later, the jury acquitted the defendants of the felony charge, as a result of their defence counsel's ingenious claim that, in the language of the statute, burglary could not be committed at the top of a building, only within it. The three jumpers were, however, convicted of reckless endangerment and illegal BASE jumping (Rosenberg "Not guilty"). In July, Hartwell was sentenced to 100 hours of community service for the part he played in the stunt (Rosenberg "Lookout"). In August, Brady and Rossig were fined \$2000 each, and sentenced to 250 and 200 hours of community service, respectively (Rosenberg "Jail time"). Markovich was later sentenced to 300 hours of community service as a result of his lack of remorse (Rosenberg "Judge blasts").

Markovich, Rossig and Brady were not, however, the first people to jump at the WTC site with a parachute. Almost a year after Petit's wire-walk between the towers, a skydiving instructor from Queens named Owen Quinn jumped from the roof of the north tower, activating his parachute after falling for fifty feet. Like Brady, Quinn had worked on the construction of the buildings in the capacity of helping build the plaza outside the towers (Sullivan). Quinn and his friend Michael Sergio (who went on to parachute into Shea Stadium during the 1986 World Series) infiltrated the north tower dressed as construction

workers. Sergio took a photograph of Quinn's jump he called "The Point of No Return" which captured Quinn poised to leap over the edge (Figure 3.13) (Mackey). The restaurant on the forty-fourth floor of the tower was subsequently named "Sky Dive" (Kiesling). In September 1980, a man parachuted from the observation deck of the south tower (McFadden "Parachutist") and four years later an Australian man replicated the stunt ("Parachutist Makes World Trade Jump"). In May 1991, American John Vincent also jumped from the observation deck ("John Vincent on Donahue 1995"). In March 1999, Norwegian BASE jumper Thor Axel Kappfjell jumped from the south tower, after having jumped from both the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building in 1998. He died four months later following an unsuccessful jump in Finland ("Thor Kappfjell"). From before they were officially opened to just two and a half years before they were destroyed, daredevils jumped from the towers.

As much as jumping from the WTC has unavoidable connections to the destruction of the towers and the victims of the attacks, then, the jump is also a consistent element of the history of the site. On YouTube, Brady's video is the most popular out of the three with over 3.7 million views (as of 4 December 2016). This popularity could be explained by the fact that Brady, as an ironworker on the building, was a key and prominent figure in the construction of the new tower. In the three years before the BASE jump, Brady made an appearance in four separate publicity events for the tower. To mark the ten-year anniversary of the attacks, the *New York Times* assigned Pulitzer Prize winning photographer Damon Winter to photograph the ironworkers of the new 1 WTC. Brady features prominently in the photographs (one image features him holding a beam whilst another is a profile shot) and in the accompanying article by Randy Kennedy (Figures 3.14 and 3.15). In August 2012, cameras captured Brady installing a memorial beam signed by Barack Obama on the 104th floor (Figure 3.16). Nine months later, the Port Authority fixed a GoPro camera to the base of

the tower's spire to film as the final section was hoisted through the air and fixed to the top (Daly). Just two days prior to the jump, Brady was part of the team for *TIME* magazine's project of taking a panoramic photograph of the view from the balcony around the spire (Sanburn). "Every piece of steel on the south side of the building", Brady tells interviewer Tim Sohn after the jump, "I touched probably three times. You live there. It's like your place. So to me it wasn't even like it was something wrong. It was like, we're just finishing" (qtd. in Sohn).

In his exploration of "wearable technology", anthropologist Richard Chalfen writes of the WTC spire GoPro footage that "[o]nly a very few people will ever witness anything like this action in first person, real life" (300). "GoPro", he continues, "facilitates and extends ways and means of seeing ... in addition to using GoPro for extreme sports, we also have cases of extreme work" (300). Brady straddles this line between authorised, documented celebrations of the tower's height and an unauthorised, documented testament to the tower's height. Chalfen's comment that few people will witness this sight from the top of the building are particularly striking in light of Brady's jump. After all, he participated in both extreme sports and extreme work at the site. The extreme work occurring at the top of the new WTC, Kennedy explains, makes a visitor to the top of the tower feel as if they have been there before. This feeling, Kennedy asserts, is a result of the fact that scenes of workers precariously balanced on tall buildings are "deeply embedded in the image bank of the 20th and 21st centuries". For example, Kennedy writes, Lewis Hine and Bruce Davidson "poetically chronicled" the construction of the Empire State Building and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, respectively.²⁶ Kennedy continues that these photographs give "flesh and

²⁶ Winter's WTC ironworker images share distinctive characteristics with photographs by Hine and Davidson: shot in black and white, bodies precariously balanced on the infrastructure, workers dwarfed by the size of the project. A selection of Hine's photographs can be found in the Digital Collections of the New York Public Library and of Davidson's photographs in the online catalogue of Magnum Photos.

bone to ironworkers who otherwise would have been phantoms of progress, risking their lives, unseen, hundreds of feet above the city”. As well as forging a connection to the many instances of people jumping with a parachute from the WTC before it was destroyed, these images of Brady the ironworker are also entangled with an entire archive of photographs of ironworkers involved in the continual redevelopment of Manhattan.

“There is a good deal of strolling on the thin edge of nothingness”, C. G. Poore writes of the Empire State Building’s ironworkers (156). Indeed, Kennedy singles out Brady in particular as “an astonishingly agile connector who grabs the steel with gloved hands and sets it in place, shinnying beams without a harness”. Jim Rasenberger explains that the connectors, who hang and bolt in the steel beams, “are the alpha dogs of high steel” who usually work without ropes or harnesses. Such a combination of expert handling and extraordinary bravery recalls Chalfen’s balancing of GoPro’s ability to document both extreme sports and extreme work. This sentiment is reiterated by Brady himself when he explains why he enjoys an occupation that straddles the boundary between work and daredevilry: “I love to climb – so just climbing, being up high ... Real ironworkers, they’re all a little wild, or a lot wild, you know? And they’re all hustlers, they’re all hard workers” (qtd. in Kennedy). Kennedy continues, rather hyperbolically, that Brady’s “broad face ... seems to sustain the immense weight of the Trade Center site’s past and express the perseverance that has powered the rise of a new tower”. The article, published two years before the jump, positions Brady’s physicality as the meeting point between past, present and future. In hindsight, his body, as well as the bodies of Rossig and Markovich, and their movements can be said to both sustain and expose the site’s past by engaging with the movements of those who died during the terrorist attacks, as well as the bodies of those who participate in the construction of the site. Brady’s body is, then, a sturdy symbol for the

regeneration of the site and also a moving reminder of its past: a phantom of progress and a ghost of destruction.

Kennedy's heroising of Brady finds a counterpart in Michael Daly's article for the *Daily Beast* published after the jumps, in which he writes: "[Brady] is the one who parachuted off a tower that he helped to build, the daredevil who had previously faced the on-the-job dangers that all of his trade routinely face to little public notice ... Maybe there should be an amendment to the jumping off a structure law, a kind of ironworker exception". In his sentencing of Brady and Rossig, however, New York Supreme Court Judge Juan Merchan condemned their choice of building, stating: "They made a very, very poor decision. They executed a base jump off of One World Trade Center ... an iconic building constructed on hallowed ground". "In doing so", he continues, "these defendants tarnished the building before it even opened and *sullied the memories of those who jumped on 9/11 not for sport but because they had to*" (qtd. in Crilly, emphasis added). Similarly, in an interview with Diana Williams for ABC, current NYPD Commissioner William Bratton stated: "From my perspective, that jump was a desecration of that site. *Too many people jumped off that building on 9/11*, and so to basically photograph that descent, if you will ... sorry I have no sympathy for them. I hope the judge throws the book at them" (qtd. in Ritter, emphasis added). Both statements not only connect the falls of the BASE jumpers with those of the 9/11 victims, but also suggest that the GoPro footage in some way recreated the falls of 2001. Bratton goes as far as to assert that the 9/11 jumpers and the WTC BASE jumpers actually jumped from the same building, which is, of course, not true. This architectural slippage between those who fell from office windows of the north and south towers in September 2001 and those who jumped from the roof of the new One World Trade Center twelve years later highlights the texture of closely intertwined threads along which images of falling circulate the WTC site.

In *The Thrill Makers: Celebrity, Masculinity, and Stunt Performance*, Jacob Smith recounts the story of Sam Patch, a mule spinner (a skilled worker in yarn production) who performed a jump from a bridge near the Passaic Falls in Paterson, New Jersey in 1827 that was being moved into position to provide access to Forest Garden, an “elite resort” (14). The construction of the resort, which had been built on the site of a children’s playground, had incurred the wrath of many workers in the area. Smith writes that waterfalls “like the one in Paterson were an integral part of the emerging American industrial economy: the falls were the engines that drove the factory mills where Patch was a mule spinner” (14). “We might understand Patch’s jump”, he continues, “as an act that unleashed or reconfigured the frozen cultural meaning embedded in the bridge ... a single working-class person could not design, fund, and build the bridge, but he or she could jump from its span, and in that moment appropriate and redirect some of its cultural power” (16). Smith’s understanding of the relationship between structure, worker and thrill-seeking jump allows for a view of Brady’s jump which counters the opinions of Merchan and Bratton who consider the stunt to be a sacrilegious offense. Their attitudes towards the BASE jumps positions the site as a sacred space, utterly transformed by the attacks of 2001. Yet, as this chapter has shown, the BASE jumps also constitute a moment in a much longer history of extreme performance and extreme sport at the WTC site. Further, through Brady the jumps also become entangled with the extreme work involved in constructing a skyscraper. If the WTC site, as Flowers suggests, is the product of violent destruction and regeneration, Brady’s BASE jump connects with both the lines of movement of the victim and the lines of movement of the worker. Brady as both jumper and worker presents a challenge to the understanding of the WTC as Ground Zero, sacred dust and a reminder of rupture, by instead performing a jump that entangles with the longer history of violent regeneration of the site.

3.3.2 Elongating the Ephemeral: Moving with the Image

“You might say”, explains staff writer for the *New Yorker* Nick Paumgarten, “that a BASE jump consists of two main ingredients: the jump itself and the record of it”. Whereas for Merchan the WTC BASE jumps vandalised sacred space, for Bratton it is the act of recording the jumps that is the truly unforgiveable element of the “crime”. What is it about the footage that makes Bratton so indignant that he cannot finish his sentence? Perhaps this headline from *Digg*, an online archive of stories on the web, on the footage offers a clue: “This is what it’s like to BASE jump off the World Trade Center”. In an article for the *Daily Beast*, Justin Miller goes further, writing: “You can’t watch this and not think it’s what people must have seen as they chose suicide over certain death on September 11 – one of the most controversial images of that day remains ‘the falling man’”. Through Miller’s description, then, the video footage shows what it is like to *fall* from the WTC: what it might be like to fall to your death from the top of one of the tallest buildings in the world. There is an immersive quality to the GoPro footage that, particularly in this geographical context, engages the viewer on two levels. Firstly, the video is part of a phenomenon of first-person perspective footage of jumps, falls and flights courtesy of GoPro cameras. As Chalfen suggests, GoPro videos can give viewers access to scenes that they may never witness in real life. Secondly, and more particularly to this trio of videos that has not been uploaded to the GoPro YouTube page or seemingly acknowledged by GoPro in any way, this footage is inextricably entwined with another set of images and experiences that viewers will never witness in real life: the experiences of the victims of 9/11.²⁷

The immersive, first-person perspective of a headfirst fall from the WTC allows the viewer a new perspective of the fall of the person in Drew’s photograph because of the

²⁷ Rossig is quoted by Paumgarten as saying GoPro “didn’t want to be associated with us”.

specific geography of the jump. In her exploration of first-person perspective camera footage, Sarah Pink writes that if place is conceived as a texture of interwoven elements, “first person camera recordings would not so much ‘capture’ a context, but are both part of the ecology of place in which they are made and record a trace through it, rather than a view of it” (“Forward” 243). The GoPro footage, then, is not simply what is “‘in’ the viewfinder”, or in the case of the GoPro, which does not have a viewfinder, what is “in” the camera’s field of view, but rather the footage records “the trace of the route that was taken through the world by the person/camera moving together” (Pink, “Forward” 245). Paolo Favero goes as far to say that the GoPro camera melds with the body of the user so that the body “functions as a viewfinder, determining what will be contained and what will be excluded by the image”, becoming “literally the eye of the camera” (220-22). As the GoPro camera moves with the jumpers through the thick, raw space surrounding the WTC, the footage also becomes a part of the ongoing creation of that place, entangling with the numerous other people who have skydived, walked, climbed and jumped from the WTC. Rossig’s body, the “eye of the camera”, becomes enmeshed with Petit and the 9/11 jumpers, amongst others, opening the falling-body image out to encounter other bodies.

I am going to isolate Rossig’s GoPro footage for the next two sections of the chapter. The significance of Brady’s jump has been explored in the previous section and Markovich’s jump, although spectacular, does not have the extended moment of freefall that appears in both Rossig’s and Brady’s videos. Rossig’s footage is the shortest at under a minute long but, along with Brady’s video, demonstrates a spectacular and exhilarating headfirst freefall. Unlike Brady’s footage, however, Rossig’s video begins at the very moment of the jump at the edge of the building. Rossig leaps from the top and performs a backwards somersault before falling headfirst down the tower. The helmet-mounted camera gives viewer’s a first-person perspective of this fall. He freefalls for approximately ten seconds before deploying

his parachute as he reaches the Verizon building, around 150 metres from the ground. He turns in mid-air, landing on Vesey Street in between the Goldman Sachs building and Three World Financial Center. Rossig lands running, pulling his parachute behind him and the footage ends abruptly (“NYC Freedom Tower B.A.S.E. Jump (3d Camera)”). Whereas the other two videos begin with bodies moving in the dark, talking to and encouraging each other, this footage begins in the dark with Rossig hurtling over the edge, and so there is no video contextualisation for what is happening. In both Brady’s and Markovich’s footage, we gradually become aware that the figures on top of the tower are going to jump. With no preamble whatsoever in Rossig’s video, however, the camera footage “launches the viewer” over the side of the tower into freefall.

Paumgarten uses Rossig’s WTC BASE jump and its consequences as his conclusive example of how the “pervasiveness of cameras” may seem “playful and benign” but has the potential to manifest itself as something entirely different by encouraging us to build “a vast prison of self-administered surveillance”. Of Rossig’s video, Paumgarten writes

Most striking of all is the vision, once the plummet begins, of the illuminated glass façade of the tower sliding past, the pace accelerating yet oddly slow, almost elegant, with no trace really of violence or terror. In 1878, “Sallie Gardner at a Gallop,” in a sense history’s first film, depicting a thoroughbred in profile, surprised many viewers who’d previously misconstrued the mechanics of a galloping horse. These days, the drift of One World Trade’s lit windows has a similar effect. So this is free fall.²⁸

What Paumgarten is suggesting is that GoPro technology presents a similar pivotal moment in the filming of motion to Eadweard Muybridge’s project. In fact, body or vehicle mounted cameras have a long history. In the 1970s, researchers at the Smith-Kettlewell Institute of Visual Sciences in San Francisco developed a prototype head-mounted camera for the blind.

²⁸ Commissioned by tycoon and co-founder of Stanford University, Leland Stanford, “Sallie Gardner at a Gallop” refers to the project by photographer Eadweard Muybridge to determine whether a horse lifts all four feet off the ground at the same time whilst galloping. In June 1879 at Stanford’s farm in Palo Alto, Muybridge attempted to discover the answer. A building on one side of the track housed several cameras, whilst a white backdrop hung on the other side to heighten the contrast (Leslie). The horse named Sallie Gardner kicked strings as she passed which then activated the shutters of the waiting cameras. Following the experiment, Stanford had the evidence he wanted: at one point in the gallop, the horse was fully airborne (Rayment).

This camera allowed for digital images to pass through a matrix of electrodes which was mounted on a vest to be worn under clothes in order to feed electronic pulses onto the skin of the subject to warn them of any potential obstacles or dangers (Szeto and Riso 63-64). In 1976, filmmaker Claude Lelouch made a short film, *C'était un Rendez-vous*, in which a camera was mounted to the bumper of a car, documenting the vehicle's movements as it sped through Paris. In 1987, husband and wife Mark Schulze and Pat Mooney produced what would be called *The Great Mountain Bike Video*. Mooney explains that Schulze mounted a camera to a helmet which was linked to a VCR kept in a padded backpack. Mountain bikers would then wear the camera whilst riding in order to instruct amateurs (Mooney). In the early nineties, Massachusetts Institute of Technology PhD student Steve Mann developed what he termed "wearable computing". In language reminiscent of T. Nikki Cesare Schotzko's "digital access to intimacy", this technology had the goal of positioning the computer "in such a way that the human and computer are inextricably intertwined, so as to achieve ... intelligence that arises by having a human being in the feedback loop of the computational process" (Mann). Mann streamed live footage on the Internet from his head-mounted camera (Mann). GoPro, founded in 2002, is relatively young compared to these projects (Favero 222).

Used for documenting everyday life and recording extreme motion, these technologies record processes of movement of and through the body. Both the camera for the blind and Mann's wearable device depend upon the human body's movements within technological and computational processes. *C'était un Rendez-vous* and *The Great Mountain Bike Video* also foreground the experience of the body in motion, whether by driving a car or riding a bike. Importantly, this experience is transferred through head- or vehicle-mounted cameras to the multi-sensory engagement of the subject or viewer. As Paumgarten suggests of "Sallie Gardner at a Gallop", these mounted cameras evince the *mechanics* of movement:

the procedures and operations of the body through which everyday or extreme movement occurs. Muybridge's photographs prove that all four of the horse's feet are off the ground simultaneously. Similarly, Rossig's GoPro footage shows the viewer the mechanics of free fall: the fast rush of air and the contrasting slow drift of the windows as Rossig plummets to the earth. When Paumgarten writes of the footage "[s]o this is free fall" he might instead deduce "so *that* is free fall". We do not experience the free fall ourselves. Rather, Rossig's video demonstrates the "playful entanglement" of body, camera and environment in free fall, an entanglement of lines we can follow (Favero 223).

As well as tracing the route of the moving body, what is particularly recognisable about GoPro footage is the movement of the videos themselves as they are circulated online. In an article for *Inc.* magazine, a publication for entrepreneurs and business owners, Tom Foster provides a thorough study of GoPro, writing that the production value of GoPro footage unleashes "viral possibilities" and that the company thinks not only about its customers but also its audience (54). GoPro creator and CEO Nick Woodman explains the company's "positive feedback loop": "Capture, creation, broadcast and recognition" (58). Each revolution of the circle creates a spiral upwards and outwards, lifting the quality of the footage produced, the size of the audience and ultimately the number of cameras purchased. "We know that our cameras are arguably the most socially networked consumer devices of our time", Woodman asserts, "so it's clear that we are not just building hardware" (qtd. in Foster 58). The technology is important but the spreadability, rather than virality, of its content (i.e. how many times the video is viewed or shared) is equally, if not more, important to the success of the GoPro brand. In a similar fashion to the creation of conspiracy theories and memes discussed in the previous chapter, the GoPro camera footage as a framing narrative for the falling-body image encourages a "spiralling" outwards into the future as the video is consumed and re-circulated.

Jeff Ferrell et al explore the relationship of the BASE jump with the various ways that the jumps are recorded and circulated. They write that recording BASE jumps “elongate[s] the experience” so that jumps can be considered “ephemeral moments that find endless elaboration as they are presented and re-presented” (179). Writing in the early 2000s, before the advent of YouTube and other sharing platforms, Ferrell et al focus on Bridge Day, an annual festival in Fayetteville, West Virginia, where people are allowed to jump off the New River Gorge Bridge for one day (181). The event’s meaning, they suggest, is “constructed out of danger, skill, and subculture, but also by its circulation” (180). In language similar to GoPro’s “positive feedback loop”, Ferrell et al assert that the jumpers find themselves in “a complex, expanding spiral of mediated meaning” (183). In the context of Bridge Day, these practices include: video footage of previous jumps playing in the foyers of hotels; press kits with timetables which encourage future videos and photographs; camera crews along the bridge from various media outlets; a “media pit” around the launch point; as well as event organizers, judges and friends recording the jumps themselves (183-85). As a result of the footage and photographs, the “ephemeral moment” of the jump continues far beyond the specific geographical and temporal parameters of the festival. In the case of Bridge Day, the footage seems to be as much a part of the anticipation and continuation of the sport as the actual jumps themselves.

These videos and photographs are replayed and distributed through underground and mainstream networks, creating a “dense web of mediated practices” (187, 192). In a similar fashion to the documentation of the “ironworkers in the sky”, these videos and photographs “document and elongate the ephemeral experience of BASE jumping and fix in the subcultural memory the otherwise transitory status and achievement which accompanies these experiences” (188), giving “flesh and bone” to acts we might otherwise never get to see (Kennedy). The extended web of images therefore encounters a wider variety of audiences so

that a “perfectly private moment ... comes to be encased in the expectation of audience and collective meaning” (Ferrell et al 192-93). Before anyone takes a step off the bridge, the jumps on Bridge Day are already enmeshed in what Ferrell et al call “concentric circles of mediated representation” (196). But, in light of advancements in digital and social media since 2001, BASE jump videos like the WTC jumps move along far messier and unrulier lines of interconnectivity than the description of “concentric circles” suggests. Footage of BASE jumps and other extreme sports are readily accessible on a multitude of platforms far beyond the sport’s niche roots. Consequently, these falling-body videos can become entangled with falling-body videos quite removed from the act of BASE jumping.

The elongation of the BASE jump relies on processes of movement: moving bodies create content and users “move” this content through sharing sites like YouTube. In the case of the WTC BASE jump GoPro videos, Woodman’s model of the spiralling feedback loop becomes embroiled in a spiralling and uncontrollable meshwork that GoPro did not intend. Although the WTC BASE jump footage has not been recognised by GoPro, it is the GoPro camera which captured the moment of freefall at the WTC and thus opened up the GoPro footage to entangle with other falling bodies (Paumgarten). From Figures 3.17-3.19 it is evident that the search for “WTC jump” shows the entanglement of the BASE jump videos with video compilations of news footage of people jumping from the towers during the attacks, as well as a version of Henry Singer’s documentary *9/11: The Falling Man*, and other thrill-seeking exploits such as Felix Baumgartner’s space jump.²⁹ Comments on Brady’s and Markovich’s videos include: “RIP to those who didn’t have a parachute on that fateful day” and “looks like these wtc jumpers were better prepared than the last ones” (“NYC Freedom Tower B.A.S.E. Jump”, “Marko Markovich’s BASE Jump off the 1 WTC”). In the previous

²⁹ These screenshots are taken from a public computer so the results are not affected by the search history for Drew’s photograph or the 9/11 jumpers on my personal laptop.

chapter, I drew on the work of Pink and Christine Hine to sketch out the spatiality of the Internet, considering the web as a “field of potential forms of relatedness” that have the potential to be activated, and interwoven into “intensities of place” (Pink, “Visual” 120). Similarly, my approach to this thesis has been to follow Pink’s advice that researchers focus and follow the “routes through which images are produced and interpreted”; to not ask with what is the image connected but rather “with what it is *accompanied* and *intertwined* as it is produced and consumed” as the image moves along continuous lines as they thread through an environment (“Sensory” 12). We move with the GoPro footage along intersecting lines of extreme moments, both high adrenaline sporting activities and the death plunge. As framing narratives, the GoPro BASE jump videos both encourage the continuing circulation of the videos and images of those who jumped from the towers, and also highlight conflicting, but still entangled, notions of falling that encompass both the joy and excitement of freefall with the terror of certain death.

GoPro cameras went with the men as they jumped from the roof of the tower, and GoPro cameras recorded their descent. Acknowledged or not, the BASE jump footage is enmeshed and moves with recognised GoPro footage as well as footage of 9/11’s falling bodies. First person perspective videos, Pink writes, “record a trace as a person moves through the world” but we do not “become” this person by watching the video. Instead we move “with the recordings by following a trace through the world that has been created with a particular positioning that we are made aware of when being invited to imagine with it” (“Forward” 250). Pink is not explicitly referencing GoPro cameras here, once again emphasising the ubiquity of recording first-person perspective movement. Her observation that we follow a trace through the world recorded by the camera, in the case of the WTC BASE jumps, however, attends to the thick, unruly space of entangled bodies I am suggesting exists around the WTC site. Not only does the footage create a “trace through the world”

through the entangled bodies and lines of movement at the WTC, but also through the Internet as place, which we follow as the footage moves with the bodies of the 9/11 jumpers. When Paumgarten writes “[s]o this is free fall” after watching Rossig’s video, in fact the viewer is implicated in a complex entanglement of bodies, camera and environment. By watching the WTC BASE jump videos, we are also following the traces of the routes of the WTC victims.

3.4 The World Trade Center as Haptic Space

3.4.1 *GoPro and Haptic Visuality*

GoPro videos, Richard Chalfen writes, “play with the idea of ‘presence’ and ‘being there’” in that “efforts are directed towards allowing a viewer to believe she/he is/was there, participating in some unusual activity” (300). In their book *GoPro: Professional Guide to Filmmaking*, Bradford Schmidt and Brandon Thompson offer a similar celebration of GoPro’s capabilities: “The human head is an ideal camera-mounting location ... The near eye-level view simulates the human perspective and gives the viewer *the immersive sensation of seeing another’s point of view*” (48, emphasis added). With the footage containing “scenes that could not be seen any other way” (Chalfen 300), the GoPro camera provides what Schotzko calls a “digital access to intimacy” which this thesis has interpreted as a way to remotely encounter the movements of the falling body (52). Carolee Schneemann used her computer to create contact between her body and the bodies of the jumpers, pressing into the images, in a way that is comparable, I suggest, to web users that uploaded, memorialised, interrogated and parodied the falling-body image. Similarly, watching the WTC BASE jump GoPro videos allows the viewer to follow the route the falling body takes from the top of the WTC, placing the viewer’s body in an encounter with the falling body. Although GoPro technology cannot *actually* transfer the viewer into the activity of jumping from the top of the WTC, the footage offers an opportunity or invitation for the viewer’s static body to touch the

experience of the camera user's body in action. Here, I will examine in further detail the "immersive" quality of the GoPro technology, and how viewers engage with the thick, unruly space at the WTC site.

As Pink suggests, by following the path of the camera user, we move with the recorded trace of another's trajectory, encountering the movements of another body. Pink asserts that with first person perspective footage "we are not looking through their eyes or feeling through their bodies" but by watching the footage, the viewer is "invited to imagine" an experience shaped by the experience of the camera and the body moving together (Pink, "Forward" 250). The very elongation of the ephemeral moment of jumping through photographs and video, as Ferrell et al argue, also brings about the re-emergence of the "ineffable": that which is "beyond the possibility of full symbolic representation, beyond imaginary play" (193). In other words, the film footage is "never fully 'it'" (194). The video footage of the Bridge Day jumps, and the WTC jumps, stabilise what would otherwise be intangible events so that we can reach out and "touch" them, creating the potential for a digital access to intimacy or an encounter between viewing body and "doing" body. But there is an "untamed 'excess'" which is always just beyond our grasp: the "ineffability of the edge" (Ferrell et al 195). The power of the WTC BASE jump footage is the friction between immersion in the body of another, and awareness of our own bodies.

The connection between the viewing and falling bodies, then, is more complex than a simple transference of experience. What the footage encourages is a haptic encounter between the viewer and the WTC site, a thick and unruly space dense with the bodies that have occupied it through every cycle of destruction and regeneration. Laura Marks proposes a way of looking called "haptic visuality" in which "the eyes themselves function like organs of touch", and whereby haptic looking "tends to move over the surface of its object, rather than plunge into illusionistic depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is

more inclined to move than to focus, more inclined to graze than to gaze” (162). Haptic vision “privileges the material presence of the image” and “forces the viewer to contemplate the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative” (163). Through this caressing look, the viewer must actively work to discern the image by moving over and around its texture (183). The falling body in the GoPro videos offers a trace of a route taken through a space saturated with other bodies, but cannot be fully possessed. As Jennifer Barker writes in her exploration of the tactility of cinema, the “film’s body is ... a concrete but distinctly cinematic lived-body, neither equated to nor encompassing the viewer’s or filmmaker’s body, but engaged with both of them” (7-8). The viewer, never possessing the filmic body, luxuriates in an entanglement with it:

If anything, it could be said that we are both “here” – at the surface of our own body – and “there” – at the surface of the film’s body – in the same moment. When the film’s and the viewer’s skins caress one another, there is *fusion* without *confusion*. We are up against each other, *entangled in a single caress*, but we do not elide the boundaries altogether between our body and the film’s body. (Barker 36, emphasis added).

There is “contact and intertwining” in this entanglement of bodies but “there is never a collapse or dissolution of the boundary between” them (Barker 29). Just as we follow the trace of the image through the understanding of the WTC as a thick space of bodies, the haptic engagement with the GoPro footage provides an even greater digital access to intimacy with this space.

It may seem odd to suggest that Rossig’s BASE jump video engages a haptic visuality when the footage prioritises vertical movement, plunging the viewer downwards towards the streets of Manhattan. The haptic, in seeming contrast, “encourages the viewer’s gaze to move horizontally over the images, like fingertips caressing a particularly lush fabric” (Barker 38). The GoPro camera *does*, however, encourage a horizontal view by the very fact that it has “an ultrawide lens that ... can capture 170 degrees of the world in front of it” (Schmidt and Thompson 463). This ultra-wide, “fish-eye” lens extends and exaggerates what the viewer

can see on the horizontal axis, inciting the viewer to look at the distorted periphery of the video and encouraging their gaze to move horizontally even as the camera records Rossig's vertical movement (Bédard 2). Marks writes that haptic images "can give the impression of seeing for the first time, gradually discovering what is in the image rather than coming to the image already knowing what it is" (178). Although the YouTube video is labelled "NYC Freedom Tower B.A.S.E. Jump", the initial seconds of an almost-black screen "protect the viewer from the image, or the image from the viewer" because we do not have time to prepare for what we are going to see (Marks 177), and it takes the viewer a moment to reorient their perspective. Without the extraneous hesitations, conversations and extended getaways present in Markovich's and Brady's footage, the viewer is forced to "contemplate the image" rather than the longer narrative surrounding the jumps (Marks 163).

During Rossig's freefall, the smooth, flat surface of the tower itself becomes texturized by the reflection of the city lights, creating the effect that the glass is rippling (Figure 3.20). The layering reflections of lights and the city makes it difficult to discern the exact outline of the tower, as the building merges into the surrounding skyline. The image is chaotic and, combined with the athletic somersault as Rossig launches himself from the tower, disorientating as the viewer needs a moment to adjust to what they are seeing. Consequently, Rossig's video in particular seems to offer the most intense haptic engagement for the viewer. When Rossig is falling, the eye is drawn downwards, following the trajectory of the camera, but the video also creates a kaleidoscope of dark and lit windows across the glass tower, that ripples and shifts outwards horizontally. From the disorientating beginning to the textured and reflective surface of the tower, the viewer in the first ten seconds of the video engages with the horizontal, haptic visuality as well as the vertical narrative of descent. Through this haptic quality to the footage, the viewer can begin to understand the WTC as a space saturated with the trajectories of falling and performing bodies. As viewers, we focus

on the sensations of the image itself, not least the roaring of the air as Rossig's body slices through space in his descent. In this moment, the "aural boundaries between body and world ... feel indistinct": the very space around the tower presses into Rossig's moving form through the rushing of air around his falling body (Marks 183). The digital access to intimacy allows the viewer's body and the falling filmic body to press against each other in ten seconds of exhilarating free fall.

This multisensory line drawn from Rossig's first-person perspective of falling headfirst from the WTC to Drew's photograph of a person falling headfirst from the WTC is, of course, complicated and troubling. I wish to be clear that the WTC BASE jump and the 9/11 jumpers are distinct in a number of ways, not least in the way that, at the end of Rossig's video, he lands on the ground lightly and runs away, dragging his parachute behind him. But that these falling bodies share space cannot be denied. Andrea D. Fitzpatrick is very much concerned with representations of falling after the attacks for the way that they navigate the ethical responsibility towards those who died in this way. Her "paradigm of vulnerability" includes the physical vulnerability of those who fell to their deaths, their posthumous vulnerability to particular labels and, crucially, a vulnerability on the behalf of the viewer, who remains open to the experience of falling (102). Like Schneemann's digital access to intimacy, the viewer's body intervenes directly into the flow of falling. The GoPro footage makes the viewer's body vulnerable and open to the multi-valent meaning of falling at the WTC through the trace of the routes we follow through the thick space of bodies and as a result of a haptic engagement with the image. In this view, it is not so much that the challenge is knowing how to speak of the falling body, but that productive knowledge can come from following the routes these images take and the means by which viewers and technologies encounter and intertwine with them (Fitzpatrick 85).

3.4.2 “Death is very close”: *The World Trade Center* and *The Walk*

Following the release of Robert Zemeckis’ feature length portrayal of the story of Petit’s high-wire walk between the towers, *The Walk*, two crucial and seemingly contradictory things happened. First, Mark Harris, a journalist for *Vulture* and *Entertainment Weekly*, tweeted from a press screening that there were “guys vomiting” in the bathroom after watching the film. Continuing, Harris stated that the film was a “[b]ad visual trigger for vertigo sufferers”. Similarly, Denise Widman, board director of the Boston Jewish Film Festival, told the *New York Post*: “The last 20 minutes of the film I had to look away a couple of times because of the sensation of the height. I felt a little bit queasy. I felt nervous. It was a tingling sensation and some anxiety” (qtd. in Roberts and Steinbuch). Neil Janowitz, editorial director at *Vulture*, tweeted from the film’s press conference at the Museum of Modern Art that Zemeckis stressed his desire to create this dizzying sensation, stating “we worked really hard to induce vertigo”. In her report for *Esquire* on these extreme reactions, Megan Friedman writes “it’s always good press when your movie is so realistic, stomachs literally can’t handle it”. For the *New York Post*, Georgett Roberts and Yaron Steinbuch concur: “*The Walk* could make you sick”.

That the film’s final act, in which Joseph Gordon-Levitt as Petit walks between the towers, is “so real” (Friedman) and “so realistic” (Roberts and Steinbuch) that it renders audiences nauseous is what makes the second revelation about the film so significant. According to the film’s visual effects supervisor Kevin Baillie, in a report about the film for the *BBC News*, the WTC in the film “was basically just a forty foot by sixty foot by twelve foot high corner of one of the towers. And everything else was green screen”. Using a new cloud computing software called Conductor, the effects team processed over nine million hours of visual effects, the most extensive use of cloud computing in the history of film. On one processor, Baillie explains, the rendering time would have taken over a millennium.

Using up to 30,000 processors to render the images and then downloading them back to the artists, Conductor also saved fifty percent on production costs, allowing Zemeckis the budget to include four extra minutes in the walk scene (“A millennium was spent in the cloud making *The Walk*”). The key scene, then, negotiates a line itself between a stomach-churning and dizzyingly visceral reality, and the computer generated illusion that the towers still exist. As film scholar Miriam Ross writes, “[i]n the production of illusionary spatial coordinates, all 3D films ask viewers to oscillate in ongoing tactile processes of here and there: sensing the material aspects of the film and, simultaneously, the way in which it is not solid or graspable” (3D 41). In a similar fashion to the experience of watching the WTC BASE jump GoPro footage on YouTube, the 3D walk scene plays with the idea of “here” and “there”, entangling the static body of the viewer with the precarious, moving body at the WTC. The audience is somehow sat “here” in a cinema in the second decade of the twenty-first century, over a decade after the towers were destroyed and over four decades since Petit’s walk, and that audience is also somehow “there”, with Petit over 1000 feet in the air. Immersive technologies like 3D film and GoPro first-person perspective videos as framing narratives for the falling-body image attest to the intersecting meshwork of bodies, histories and buildings at the WTC site, both destroyed and rebuilt, and place the viewer’s body within this entanglement.

In the film, Petit’s wire-walk is doubly anticipated by the audience. First of all, of course, viewers may be eager to experience the height of the towers through 3D technology. Secondly, at various moments, the film teases the viewer with first-person perspectives of the wire-walk from a great height. Notably, when Petit breaks into a circus tent, the viewer sees from Petit’s perspective as he places one foot on the high-wire but before he can follow through with the other foot, and thus become completely wire-bound, his soon-to-be mentor Papa Rudy enters the tent and demands that Petit come down (Figure 3.21). Again, later on in

the narrative, when Petit is practicing on the wire under the tutelage of Papa Rudy, and almost falls, the viewing position is directly beside him, then behind him at wire level as the wire shakes, then at his feet as he tries to stabilise himself, directly underneath him as his balance pole falls to the ground (and towards the viewer) and then above him as he clings to the wire (Figures 3.22-3.28). The viewer senses the threat of the fall, but does not experience the vertical space from a first-person perspective. In the first three quarters of the film, we never partake in the view often attributed to Petit's walks: looking down towards his foot as he steps onto the wire, and then down again to the earth over 1000 feet below. This image has, for example, appeared in Mordicai Gerstein's children's book *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (21) and in promotional material for *Man on Wire*. In the documentary itself there is a computer generated image looking down from the corner of the south tower to the ground below (Figure 3.11), which is replicated in the first thirty minutes of *The Walk*, when Petit makes his first reconnaissance mission to the top of the tower (Figure 3.29). In both cases, the camera slowly moves out into the void between the towers before it is quickly snatched away by the start of a photographic montage of the walk (in *Man on Wire*) and a sudden gust of wind that almost knocks Petit from the tower (in *The Walk*). A tension, then, builds slowly towards the highest point in the film, as we also see Petit walk between two trees (and fall after the wire breaks) and across a river (and fall because he loses concentration).

Even though the viewer is probably seeing *The Walk* with the knowledge that Petit successfully executes his WTC walk and survives, the film constructs a space around Petit and his wire that is fraught with the potential for disaster and death. If in *Man on Wire*, Petit says "death is very close" of the moment before he places both feet on the wire, *The Walk* articulates that death is very close by these moments of failure. Furthermore, viewed in 3D, the film creates a dense, multidimensional space saturated with the possibility of falling. Ross

identifies the potential for 3D film to provoke a haptic engagement in viewers. She writes that whilst 3D films may seem to depend on optical visibility, “once the moving images are brought to life ... the abundance of depth planes provokes an immersive effect through which the body is located within and in relation to, rather than at a fixed distance from, the content” (“Aesthetic” 383). Optical visibility, in contrast, requires the separation of viewer and viewed (Marks 162). By “making the framing of the screen violable and open to play” and creating “an uncontrollable, infinite depth in its image”, 3D cinema produces a “hyperhaptic visibility” (Ross, “Aesthetic” 384). This depth, Ross continues, like the horizontal gaze of Marks’ haptic images, “includes texture and the desire to touch and be touched by this texture” (“Aesthetic” 384) but it is a “spatially configured texture” (Ross, *3D* 24-25). In the case of *The Walk*, this spatially configured texture of potential falls implicates the viewer in the meshwork of falling-body images.

In her discussion of the significance of 3D imagery in James Cameron’s *Avatar* (2009), Ross describes how, in one scene, seeds from a sacred tree float around in negative parallax (the space between the screen and the audience) and “seem to swarm towards the viewer before they eventually descend” (*3D* 28). Ross explains that these seeds “make a gentle, physical connection between audiences and characters” so that we “become aware of a *thick, inhabited space* that ... produces the sensation that it could stretch around the whole viewing body” (*3D* 28, emphasis added). Similarly, in her discussion of the “*dense space* of the imaginary moon, Pandora”, Ariel Rogers writes that the film fills this space with “imaginary and luminous objects and creatures” (210, 213, emphasis added). *Avatar*, Rogers continues, populates the negative parallax with these luminous “particles”, filling the cinema space with “floating matter” (Rogers 214). “The result”, she concludes, “is the sensation that space itself is full, material, and tangible” (214). This thick, full and inhabited space asks the audience to “situate themselves in relation to the textural manifestation of the film’s

protrusion” (Ross, *3D* 28). The populated and dense space invites the viewer to place their own body within this floating, moving space, reconfiguring the relationship between viewer and film to situate the viewer within the framing narrative.

In *The Walk*, this “thick, inhabited space” is raw with memory and saturated with bodies. Although Zemeckis’ film is a markedly different film to *Avatar*, the wire-walk sequence is almost entirely the result of computer-generated imagery, like the world of Pandora in *Avatar*. In this way, both Cameron and Zemeckis use 3D imagery to populate the worlds they have created. These films use hyperhaptic visuality to fill the large, seemingly empty spaces of Pandora and around the WTC with textures that the viewer can touch or be touched by. In *The Walk*, during the preparation for the performance, a similar “connection” between audience and film occurs but it is in no way “gentle” like the floating seeds in *Avatar*. As Petit is passing the cable to the other tower, it suddenly begins to fall to the ground. There are various shots of the cable speeding over the edge of the tower as Petit and his accomplice scramble to stop it, including a birds-eye view of the cable hurtling towards the ground (Figure 3.30). Petit manages to secure the cable and it suddenly halts, but not before it springs towards the audience (Figure 3.31). The instability of the cable combined with the sound of its descent indicate the potential for Petit to fall just as suddenly, and just as fast, as his cable. The cable appears so close to the viewer that every thin, individual wire is visible, making the viewer recoil and also marvel that this is what is going to keep Petit in the air. Like the seeds in *Avatar*, the speeding cable creates a shared space between film and viewer but this time that space is thick with the possibility of falling.

In his review of the film for the *Telegraph*, Robbie Collin writes that although Petit’s wire is “held up by the towers themselves, stabilised with guy lines lashed to carefully chosen points around their edge, and secured around wooden bulwarks on either side”, when watching *The Walk*, “you’re struck by a strange feeling that the wire is somehow holding up

the towers too”. This feeling speaks all the way back to the double cover for the *New Yorker* that depicted Petit suspended without towers and without wire above an empty space and above the footprints of the towers. Similarly, the final page of Gerstein’s book features two semi-transparent towers “imprinted on the sky”, the clouds and birds visible through them, with a wire and a walker connecting them (34). Both illustrations intimate that Petit’s wire-walk keeps the memory of the towers anchored to the WTC site. Even when that space is empty, the image of Petit’s walk instantly recalls them. In *The Walk* as Petit places one foot on the wire, the sun appears in the distance (Figure 3.32). A minute later, however, as Petit stands with one foot on the wire and one foot on the tower, clouds and mist have obscured the towers (Figure 3.33). In a dream-like moment, “the outside world starts to disappear”, Petit states, the city falls silent and all that remains are Petit and the wire. “All I could see was the wire”, Petit continues in his reverie, “floating out in a straight line to infinity”, seemingly transcending the towers and the city below. As he starts to walk, however, shifting the foot on the tower to the wire, the mist disappears and the “gods in his feet” bring Petit and his walk “back down to earth” through his connection to the wire, the wire to the towers and the towers to the ground (Figure 3.34). He is the earth-bound walker once more, thinking that he can see and hear the crowd and the city below. Finally, the viewer is permitted a first-person perspective of Petit’s walk, straight down to his feet, and then the ground hundreds of feet below (3.35). From this viewpoint, the impression that Petit is “down when he is up” is even clearer, as it seems that he could be walking directly on the ground, even though he is in the air. There is a comparable shot from Rossig’s GoPro video, just after he deploys his parachute, which shows his feet clearly against the fast-approaching streets below (3.36). Perhaps these are the gods in Rossig’s feet: not only do they bring him safely back down to earth, but they also entangle his jump in the ongoing creation of space at the site, rather than as a transcendent act.

Mackay concludes that *Man on Wire* “insists that vertical space is beyond the realm of common experience, both transgressive and transcendent, and that verticality can re-route the idea of danger into an altogether different experience” (17). As I have shown, however, the artwork, articles, books and films that encounter the falling-body image after 9/11 attest to the space around the WTC, both vertical and horizontal, as within the realm of tangible and tactile experience. These texts frame the falling body as something we can touch, follow and understand as entangled in the knot in the meshwork that is the WTC site. In the case of the WTC BASE jump GoPro footage and *The Walk*, these technologies attempt to open the acts of walking and falling 1000 feet in the air to “common experience” through an enmeshment of performing and viewing bodies. In *The City’s End*, Max Page details the many ways that buildings in New York, including the WTC, have been destroyed in films, paintings, cartoons and literature to reflect, navigate and alleviate fears and anxieties over economic uncertainty, race relations, natural disasters and war (9-17). The “fantastical imagining of the city’s demise” also finds echoes in the “daily destruction that defined New York life”, the cycles of destruction, displacement and regeneration with which I opened this chapter (15). The texts I have explored, however, participate in the *rebuilding* of the WTC through the enmeshment of moving bodies that attest to the thick space of creation and destruction around the site. *The Walk* literally rebuilds the towers using cloud computing, but also reconstructs the rich and contested history of the site from its inception to its destruction to its restoration. The *New Yorker* covers, *Man on Wire*, *Great World* and the WTC BASE jumps also draw out this history through their interventions into the falling-body image. Although the 9/11 jumpers do not appear in these texts, they are caught in the meshwork of falling and performing bodies at the WTC site, and so become imbricated in new narratives of exhilaration, joy and, crucially, falling into life.

4. Falling in Love with Falling: Joy and the Falling Body

4.1 The Buoyant Fall

British multidisciplinary artist Luke Jerram, best known for his installation *Play Me, I'm Yours* (2008-) in which people are invited to play pianos placed in cities all over the world, was one of a team of five artists who participated in a parabolic flight in July 2008 in order to create art “inspired by the feeling of total weightlessness” (Dahabiyeh). During ten parabola shaped manoeuvres, Jerram and the others experienced zero gravity for less than thirty seconds at a time. For his contribution, Jerram recreated the pose of the person in Richard Drew’s photograph (Figure 4.1).³⁰ Jerram conceived this idea prior to the flight as a “simple performative act in zero-g” to acknowledge “the jumpers of 9/11 who opted to take their lives in their hands rather than die in the flames” (“Luke Jerram: Falling Man”). Re-enacting the pose of the photograph, Jerram’s body does not encounter the same peril as the person in Drew’s photograph. Jerram is not even falling. He is practically weightless, suspended in almost no gravity. Even though the work is entitled “Falling Man” after Tom Junod’s article and Henry Singer’s documentary, in reality Jerram is the floating, suspended or buoyant man. As much as “Falling Man” is conceived as a testament to those who fell to their deaths, there is also a sense of lightness or buoyancy in the project stemming from both the playfulness inherent in performing in reduced gravity and, crucially, in the way that his “fall” does not end in death.

Throughout this thesis, the production and circulation of images of the vulnerable body have provoked contrasting and shifting responses from anger to wonder, distress to excitement and both creative and personal reinterpretations. The photographs of falling bodies from the World Trade Center (WTC), Philippe Petit’s wire-walk and the Freedom

³⁰ Jerram is not the first artist to use their own body to enact the fall in an explicit tribute to the WTC terrorist attacks. Performance artist Kerry Skarbakka also performed several falls with a harness in his project “The Struggle to Right Oneself”.

Tower BASE jumps are all enmeshed in competing, but also complementary, framing narratives of portending death and affirming life. Like Jerram's *Falling Man*, many of these examples speak to the buoyancy of life, as well as the reality of death, intertwined in the image of the falling body. In its range of examples, this thesis has attempted to articulate a meshwork of falling bodies. Tim Ingold's meshwork concept foregrounds the "ever-evolving weave" of entangled lines that makes up a world always in formation (*Being Alive* 71). In the meshwork, there is no boundary between "organisms" and their environment and so relations are not *between* things but a "trail along which life is lived" (*Being Alive* 69). "Each ... trail", he continues, "is but one strand in a tissue of trails that together comprise the texture of the lifeworld" (*Being Alive* 69-70). This texture is a "relational field" in which "things are their relations ... knots in a tissue of knots" (*Being Alive* 70). Although Ingold's meshwork is preoccupied with the natural world and human life within it, this thesis has demonstrated that the framings of images of falling bodies creates a comparable meshwork of interweaving narratives through an approach that is influenced by Sarah Pink's ethnography and Doreen Massey's geography. The impetus of the meshwork on movement offers a way to explore the image of the falling body as made, replicated and re-imagined in movement. The trails or paths (or "strands") along which these images move become tied up or entangled with other paths that can seemingly come from opposing directions. For instance, as the second chapter demonstrated, Drew's photograph can be the topic of a sombre article and the raw material for a playful meme. These are vastly different iterations but both valid constituent strands of the meshwork of falling bodies.

Jerram's *Falling Man*, like the meme, is playful as much as it reproduces a photograph of someone about to die. Both instances are also not as bound to the WTC site, New York or even America: although it may have been created by an American user, the "Robert Green FAIL" meme refers to an international sporting event, and Jerram's

performance took place somewhere over Russia. The meme and the performance both refer specifically to Drew's photograph, but their interlaced trails are continually "ravelling here and unravelling there", spreading outwards away from the specific context of the photograph outlined in the first chapter (Ingold, *Being Alive* 71). This final chapter follows the trajectory set by the third chapter of moving beyond the specific parameters of the photograph and its initial publication context, beyond even the geographical specificity of the WTC and New York. This thesis follows the ripples set by the publication of Drew's photograph outwards towards images of the falling body that may not have any definitive connection to the terrorist attacks or the WTC but become implicated in the meshwork of falling bodies condensed by Drew's photograph and others. The focus of this chapter, as the discussion of Jerram's *Falling Man* implies, is the thrill or joy of falling and how this joy is inextricably linked to the tragedy of the fall. The 9/11 "jumpers" fell to their deaths, but in the following examples falling is also an act related to life and the joy of living.

First, this chapter will turn to Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man* (2007) to open up a buoyant energy in the falling-body image and to demonstrate the impossibility of capturing a discrete or fixed narrative of the event. Like the titles of Junod's article and Singer's documentary that I addressed in the introduction, DeLillo's novel addresses multiple bodies through multiple temporalities, attesting to the "explosion of possibilities" for the falling body caught in a meshwork of intersecting paths of movement (Pozorski 37). I will follow this buoyant thread to Alejandro González Iñárritu's 2014 comedy *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* as seen through his contribution to *11'09''01 – September 11* (2002), an anthology of films in response to the attacks, with an extended reading of both films. Here, I suggest that these films represent this buoyant energy through, respectively, the entanglement of the falling body with the flying body and with the viewer's body. By using intersecting planes of movement, the narratives of both films intervene into the plummet of

the falling body, catching at its movements in enmeshed lines of life. The representation in both films of the falling body's entanglement with intersecting planes of movement will inform my reading of two films centred on the falling suicides of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco: Jenni Olson's *The Joy of Life* (2005) and Eric Steel's *The Bridge* (2006). Both Olson's experimental film and "symphony of the city" and Steel's observational documentary heavily feature images of the Golden Gate Bridge (Olson qtd. in Guillen). Olson and Steel weave seemingly contradictory narratives of death and pain with life and joy through their images of city and structure, entangling the falling body in these narratives, and revealing the buoyant current running through images of falling.

4.2 Falling and Flying: Iñárritu and Slowness

4.2.1 "Body come down among us all": The Lifting Current in *Falling Man*

In the course of this thesis, the discussion has ranged far from the specific moment of a person falling from the WTC on 11 September 2001. Although this chapter experiments even further with the 9/11 falling-body image by tracing the ways that it almost disappears in three films which are not directly associated with the attacks, I want to turn first to one of the key novels of the corpus of texts grouped together as "9/11 novels": DeLillo's *Falling Man*. Since 9/11, DeLillo has been considered a prophetic figure in contemporary fiction for the way that many of his novels before the attacks outline the fragility of society and the pervasiveness of terror, as well as for the way that the WTC has been presented in these earlier works. One notable example, as Pamela Thurschwell explains, is the cover of *Underworld* (1997), which features "the twin towers rising behind a church, with a bird, shaped, as some people thought, eerily like an airplane, flying towards them" (203). Although Junod refers to DeLillo as "The Man who Invented 9/11", I want to use the novel as a means of opening up a space to discuss texts that are not explicitly about the attacks. As Linda S. Kauffman observes, "[t]he word 'opening' reverberates throughout *Falling Man*" and connotes desire, "willingness to explore

the unknown”, “leaning into something that does not have a name” and “the ability to enter imaginatively into the subjectivity of another person or thing” which slows the passing of time (136). Rather than a turn to prophecy as a means to explain the event in the wider historical context, I include an analysis of *Falling Man* here to explore the ways that the event continues to unfold as it moves through the meshwork.

I will articulate the joy or buoyancy of falling through Peter Boxall’s description of a “restorative lightness made from slowness” or a “lifting slowness” (181): “a slow lifting resistance to the demands of the body falling through space” that connects falling and dangling bodies (180). Boxall begins with a series of oppositions *between* dangling and falling, immersion in and withdrawal from the world, balanced around the encounter between two primary texts, DeLillo’s *Falling Man* and Saul Bellow’s *Dangling Man* (1944), “as around a fulcrum” (176). In the meshwork of moving bodies that this thesis establishes, there is no “between” the body and the world as pre-established nodes in the network, only a moving through or along. Although Boxall continues to use “between” until the end of his essay, he becomes much more concerned with “a line, a muddy back lane” running through these texts (176).³¹ I find that Boxall’s terminology clearly parallels Ingold’s paths and trails, his “lines of life”, that interweave to create the meshwork (*Being Alive* 63). The line running through *Falling Man* “holds the event open” and therefore moves past the representation of 9/11 by the Bush administration as a dichotomy *between* “us” and “the terrorists” (Boxall 181-82). This open space of possibility that entangles fall and lift reveals that any distinction between dangling and falling is in fact impossible to maintain (174).

Instead, the line running through the texts is an “anti-gravitational current that seeks to open an ungrounded space between dangling and falling, between entering into the world

³¹ Ingold states that the word “between” articulates “a divided world that is already carved at the joints” (2015, 147).

and being flung from it” (182). Boxall positions dangling and falling as oppositions again but the opening of space through bodily movement suggests that this anti-gravitational current runs *through* dangling and falling rather than between them. Such a distinction means that this ungrounded space is a thick meshwork of lines working through the two texts, showing the relation of falling to dangling or suspension and vice versa without asserting a prior separation *between* them (Ingold, *Being Alive* 70). This slow and lifting space created by bodies moving through the meshwork is demonstrated by DeLillo’s text through a current of slow life “catching at every pose, at every sentence, lending to every falling, moving thing a fleeting immunity from the twin demands of gravity and time passing” (Boxall 180). The meshwork “catches” at every body, ensnaring the falling form in its web, slowing and even buoying the fall. Although this chapter will mostly focus on the falling body in film rather than in literature, Boxall’s conception of the lifting or floating fall is particularly helpful when discussing the subsequent examples of the joyful fall. This concept of the joyful fall was latent in my discussion of Philippe Petit and the WTC BASE jumps in the previous chapter. These thrill-seekers perform for a love of existing for seconds or minutes in open space. Here, I take this sense of joy further by indicating its entanglement with the body falling to death.

In his analysis, Boxall utilises the example of survivor Keith Neudecker’s physiotherapy exercises for his wrist. These are slow movements that become part of a repetitive “physical mantra” that works towards the possibility of a “gentle convergence” denied by the collision of plane and building (180-81). Keith sits at a table and lets his hand dangle over the edge, making a “gentle fist”, raising “his hand without lifting his forearm” and keeping it in the air for five seconds, repeating ten times, four times a day (40). These exercises are “the true countermeasures to the damage he’d suffered in the tower, in the descending chaos ... the counting of seconds, the counting of repetitions, the times of day he

reserved for the exercises” (40). For Keith, this routine is not restorative for the cartilage damage in his wrist but for “the chaos, the levitation of ceilings and floors” (40). Extending and flexing his wrist in this way slows the “blast wave [which had] passed through the structure” and sent him to the floor when the plane collided with the tower (239). Lifting and lowering his hand slowly is a motion that speaks to and holds the event open, collapsing the binary opposition of before and after, dead and alive, falling and floating (Boxall 181). This is the kind of revelation of entanglement that this thesis suggests occurs in filmic representations of falling. The violence of collision and falling is “caught” by the slow, restorative and lifting movements of Keith’s hand.

I think we can take Boxall’s analysis further to show the current running through falling and dangling bodies in the text in even greater detail. Catherine Morley states that when the plane collides with Keith’s tower, the stories of Keith and Hammad (the hijacker) are “enmeshed” to reveal the “necessary interdependences in the new globalised world of terrorist and terror-survivor narratives” (252). I want to use this image of enmeshed bodies in the novel to articulate the buoyant narrative that slows the fall. At the moment of impact, which we are not shown until the end of the novel, Keith is aware of “vast movement”: the ceiling lifting and rippling; “massive” and “undreamed” movement; the tower lurching and leaning before rolling back (239-40). When Keith manages to leave his own office and find his friend Rumsey, however, Rumsey’s injured body is in a strikingly similar position to Keith’s when he performs his physiotherapy: “Rumsey’s coffee mug was shattered in his hand. He still held a fragment of the mug, his finger through the ring. Only it didn’t look like Rumsey. He sat in his chair, head to one side ... He saw the mark on his head, an indentation, a gouge mark, deep, exposing raw tissue ... He unbent Rumsey’s index finger and removed the broken mug” (241). Rumsey, like Keith, is sat with his hand in a sort of “gentle fist”, fingers curled around the mug’s handle. Keith uncurling Rumsey’s fingers is also similar to

the slow, measured and careful movements of Keith's own hand. In both sets of movements, there is a therapeutic calm, or slowness running through and against the chaos of the attacks. Suddenly, the "glass partition shattered ... shivered and broke and then the wall gave way behind" them and Keith, attempting to carry Rumsey out of the "smoke and dust ... [and] rubble", finds that he cannot use his left hand (242). In the final description of Keith's routine, his wrist has healed but he continues with his repetitions "facing the dusty window" and looking "into the dusty glass" whilst he recites "fragments from the instruction sheet" (235). The moment of injury and the moment of healing are entangled in dust, glass and fragments by the movements of Keith's hand. Keith's restorative hand movements "catch" the movements of Rumsey's body and the destruction of the towers.

Before the glass partition collapses, Keith observes that "[t]hings began to fall, one thing and then another" (241). He tries to lift Rumsey out of his chair but then "something outside, going past the window ... First it went and was gone and then he saw it and had to stand a moment staring out at nothing, holding Rumsey under the arms ... an instant of something sideways, going past the windows, white shirt, hand up, falling before he saw it" (241-42). The speed of the fall is slowed by a combination of the lifting motion and the time it takes Keith to process what he has seen. After Rumsey dies, and Keith is descending the stairway of the tower, he thinks he sees a body falling "and this time he thought it was Rumsey ... the man falling sideways, arm out and up, like pointed up, like why am I here instead of there" (243). Up until this point in the narrative, the reader is led to believe that Rumsey may have jumped from the towers. As he is put to sleep for his wrist surgery near the beginning of the novel, Keith has a memory of Rumsey and mentions him for the first time in the narrative: "there was Rumsey in his chair by the window ... a dream, a waking image, whatever it was, Rumsey in the smoke, things coming down" (21-22). Later, Terry Cheng, a friend of Keith and Rumsey from their poker club, tells Keith that Rumsey's mother took his

shoe, a razor blade and a toothbrush to a makeshift morgue in order to find a DNA match for her son in the remains of the towers (204). Terry then states rather offhandedly “I heard he went out a window, Rumsey” (205). Before the final chapter, then, Rumsey is associated with a window and “things coming down”, and Keith does nothing to deny that Rumsey jumped from the towers. Only at the end of the novel do we find out that “Rumsey was the one in the chair”, and had died inside the tower (244).

In her pioneering study of trapeze acts, Peta Tait employs a phenomenological approach to bodies catching movement to interpret spectator’s perceptions of the trapeze’s aerial bodies.³² She argues that a spectator will catch “the aerial body with his or her senses in mimicry of flying, within a *mesh* of reversible body-to-body (or –bodies) phenomenology” (141, emphasis added). She continues that each individual spectator will bring “his or her accumulated personal and social histories of body movement and motion to live and cinematic action, and these become absorbed into further live experiences of motion” (144). Tait’s “mesh” allows moving bodies to catch each other’s movements because the body is “oriented to others through its pre-existing history of movement, its motility” (149). When watching an aerial acrobatic performance, this sensory catching is demonstrated by “awareness of a bodily sensation” such as the spectator holding their breath, a tightening of the throat or a nervous, plummeting feeling in the stomach as the trapeze artist performs in the air (149). Keith’s body, anchored to the past and the present through his hand movements, is oriented towards Rumsey’s body, and by extension the falling body. The lifting and lowering of his hand to restore his wrist catches Rumsey’s curled hand, his dying body and the fall of the towers in the novel’s mesh of moving bodies. Tait also considers how moving bodies “reproduce cultural kinetic sensory patterning” and that these patterns are also “culturally habituated by gender, ethnic and sexual identity and these impact on how [the

³² See also Johnston, “On not Falling” 32.

performing body] viscerally responds to other bodies” (149). But, like female aerialists performing with muscular bodies and imitating male performance, these patterns can be disrupted by a “visceral encounter with an ambiguous body identity” so that a “lived body might momentarily catch a surprising cultural identity” (149-50). As the work of Carolee Schneemann has shown, the encounter with the falling-body image does not necessarily have to abide by patterns of male identity, despite the abundance of male bodies and narratives surrounding the image. As this chapter will also show, these challenges to the gendering of the photograph perpetrated by *Esquire* appear again, even within DeLillo’s novel.

The white shirt that Keith sees falling past the window when he is trying to help Rumsey out of the chair brings the ending of the novel back towards its beginning, entangling the narrative further in a mesh of bodies rather than presenting a linear narrative. The novel opens with Keith outside the towers just after the south tower falls. In fact, lots of things are falling in this opening scene: it is “a time and space of falling ash”; the “buckling rumble of the fall” still fills the air; “figures in windows a thousand feet up [are] dropping into free space” (3-4). Outside all of these falls, however, Keith sees a shirt coming “down out of the high smoke, a shirt lifted and drifting in the scant light and then falling again, down toward the river” (4). Keith walks to the apartment of his estranged wife Lianne and tells her about “a shirt coming down out of the sky” (87). The last sentences of the novel also concern the shirt: “Then he saw a shirt come down out of the sky. He walked and saw it fall, arms waving like nothing in this life” (246). It is unclear if the shirt Keith sees once he is outside the towers belongs to the man that he sees falling from inside Rumsey’s office. What is clear, however, is that the shirt only becomes a falling *man* when Keith is walking down the stairs and imagines that he sees Rumsey falling even though we know by the end of the novel that Rumsey has already died in his office. This shirt never falls to the ground, but is caught in the slow current between falling, flying and floating. Like the shirt, the final description of

Rumsey explains how he “jumped” in Keith’s grip and how his blood seemed to be “floating” (237). The last we see of Rumsey is his body “fallen away” from Keith who is still holding on to his belt (237). His body jumps, floats and falls within the same small paragraph. The shirt may be like “nothing in this life”, but everything in *Falling Man* is like the falling, floating shirt. In this complicated and messy meshwork of falling bodies, the slow movements of Keith’s physiotherapy form the anti-gravitational current running through the novel that reveals this meshwork of bodies in various states of movement “catching” at each other.

Intriguingly, the novel’s other falling body is never without his white shirt. David Janiak is a performance artist known as Falling Man who suspends himself from various structures seemingly in the position of the person in Drew’s photograph. In the weeks after the attacks, he had “been seen dangling” from a hotel balcony, in a concert hall and a few apartment buildings (33). When Lianne picks her mother up from Grand Central Station, she sees him suspended from the Park Avenue Viaduct wearing a business suit, his safety harness just visible (32-33). The description of Lianne’s observation is particularly telling in light of Boxall’s slow, anti-gravitational current:

There were people shouting up at him, outraged at the spectacle, the puppetry of human desperation, a body’s last fleet breath and what it held. It held the gaze of the world ... There was the awful openness of it, something we’d not seen, the single falling figure that trails a collective dread, *body come down among us all*. (33, emphasis added).

Janiak’s performance causes traffic to slow in the same way that his suspension slows the fall of the person in Drew’s photograph. The “last fleet breath” is slowed by those watching from the street below who could not have contemplated in such detail the bodies dropping in seconds from the towers. Janiak’s suspended or floating body holds the event open, keeping Lianne and the others in the present, enmeshing the body within the bodies of the crowd (“body *come down among us all*”). Marie-Christine Leps writes that the reader of *Falling*

Man is “placed in the midst of a mobile and transformative assemblage of memory and forgetting, and made to stand dead still, and look, and experience, and remember” (190). The phrase “dead still” is used twice in the novel, as Leps observes, but as the novel’s treatment of Rumsey shows, no one is truly still in DeLillo’s text. The dead, like Rumsey, the man in the white shirt, Hammad (who feels himself vibrating just before he dies) and even Janiak (who dies of natural causes), are never completely still in death. These figures are slowed, however, by the people watching them, who are never “dead still” themselves but are equally as mobile as they traverse this “assemblage” of bodies. The novel just encourages them to move slower, to “go slow” when they think (DeLillo 65).

The unmoored and slow bodies of the novel’s characters, and how they respond to other bodies, comes into greater view when Lianne witnesses another of Janiak’s performances. Lianne happens upon Janiak tying his harness to a railway platform on 111th street. He is wearing a “blue suit, white shirt, blue tie, black shoes” (164). In a similar fashion to Keith wondering why he is “here instead of there” as he walks down the stairway of the tower (243), Lianne “tried to understand why he [Janiak] was here and not somewhere else” (163). She realises that he is not performing for the people on the street, but for those in the approaching train who had not seen him attach his safety harness (164). As he prepares to jump, Lianne sees “her husband somewhere near” and his friend: “the one she’d met, or the other, maybe, or made him up and saw him, in a high window with smoke flowing out” (167). The “one she’d met” is Rumsey (103). In a similar fashion to Keith’s experiences in the towers, one body slips into another and another. When Janiak jumps, Lianne’s body goes limp, as this time she is witness to “[t]he jolt, the sort of midair impact and bounce, the recoil, and now the stillness” (167). Although Janiak is “motionless” and Lianne stands watching him, the blood is “rushing to his head, away from hers” and the train is “still running in a blur in her mind” with the “echoing deluge of sound falling about him” (168). Before he jumps,

Lianne even imagines the passengers on the train “already speaking into phones” or “groping for phones” in order to describe “what they’ve seen or what others nearby have seen and are now trying to describe to them” (164-65). In DeLillo’s moving meshwork of bodies, falling and buoyancy are inextricably intertwined and made visible, opening and expanding the idea of the event and collapsing binary oppositions that attempt to contain the event.

It is significant that Lianne and not Keith comes across Janiak’s performances because it stages another encounter between the female body and the falling body elucidated by Schneemann’s work. Lianne’s relationship to the falling-body image is multi-valent and protean. In the moment of seeing Janiak preparing to jump, she “goes from looking at Falling Man, to looking at Keith, to looking through Keith’s eyes [at Rumsey]” in a “rapid series of perceptual shifts” (Herren 167). Another line is added to the meshwork of falling bodies through Lianne when she thinks to herself: “Died by his own hand” (169), a phrase later connected with the suicide of her father and which she had been saying to herself “periodically” in the nineteen years since his death (218). As Graley Herren observes, DeLillo does not make this link explicit but it is clear that Lianne “intuits an experiential link between the jumpers and her father” (167). In the language of the slowly moving meshwork, Janiak’s body catches at the bodies of Lianne’s father as well as Keith, Rumsey and the people that actually jumped from the towers, opening a space of possibility and connection where there had been only death and trauma. Following the text’s revelation of the line through Falling Man and Lianne’s father, Lianne comes across Janiak’s obituary, the performer having died of natural causes after suffering from a heart ailment and high blood pressure even though he had plans for a final fall without a safety harness (219-21). Lianne notes that although there are no photographs of Janiak’s performances, she is in fact the “photosensitive surface”, and the “nameless body coming down” was “hers to record and absorb” (233). Lianne’s body stages an intervention in the performance of a man recalling the

photograph of a person (presumed male) taken by a man, and also in the meshwork of bodies surrounding Keith and Rumsey. Even though there is no photographic evidence to “slow” Janiak’s performance, Lianne’s body catches him as he jumps and bounces on the end of the rope, providing an anti-gravitational current that keeps the event open. Like the body of Schneemann, Lianne’s intervention keeps the gendering of the falling body, and the response to the falling body, as open and malleable as possible.

4.2.2 *Catching the Fall: Flying and Falling in Iñárritu’s 11’09’’01: September 11 and Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*

This chapter seeks to open such an anti-gravitational current through two films by Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu: his Oscar-winning satirical black comedy *Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* as seen through his contribution to the collaborative film project *11’09’’01: September 11*. In a similar way to Boxall’s project which links texts through the figure of the falling and suspended body, I follow the interconnecting lines moving through *11’09’’01* onwards to *Birdman* by exploring Iñárritu’s intervention into the falling-body image after 9/11. In each film, the body falling to death is slowed or buoyed by, respectively, the body of the viewer and the flying body. Although these films do not demonstrate slow motion in the sense that time and action slow down, I use Boxall’s understanding of an anti-gravitational current in literature to suggest that the meshwork of bodies at play in *11’09’’01* and *Birdman* “catches” at the falling body and entangles it within a weave of narratives, movements and people that disrupts the causality of falling. The form of both films frames the fall as moments of slowness couched by the shorter, faster shots in the rest of the films. In his study of slowness in cinema, Lutz Koepnick writes that, rather than the opposite of speed, the mode of slowness opens up the “opulent and manifoldness of the present” as a site of “multiple durations, pasts, and possible futures” (4). In other words, I

suggest, the slowness of the anti-gravitational current draws our attention to the complex mesh at work in Iñárritu's films of falling.

The intersection of bodies and movements is, in fact, a signature technique in the films of Iñárritu. In her analysis of Iñárritu's first feature film, *Amores perros* (2000), set in Mexico, Deborah Shaw highlights the structure of the film as a "network narrative" (103). This term, coined by film scholar David Bordwell, refers to "multi-stranded and multi-protagonist films which tell interconnecting stories of several characters" (Shaw 103). Bordwell writes that when we watch these films, "we mentally construct not an overarching causal project but an expanding social network" in which "[a]ny link can reveal further connections" (193). The film's entire narrative structure "rests in the perpetual commingling of characters ... inviting the viewer to build inferences out of teases, hints, and gaps" (Bordwell 199-200). In *Amores perros*, the event which brings its characters together is, according to Bordwell, the "most common chance-based convergence": the traffic accident (204). The massive car crash brings together three narrative threads as the film returns to the collision point four times, with slightly different results, to show the interweaving lives of a man having an affair with his sister-in-law, a model who has her leg amputated as a result of the crash and a former teacher who is hired by a man to kill his business partner (Shaw 104). This looping narrative emphasises what Evan Smith calls the "thread structure" of these films which include "[m]ultiple main stories – related, unrelated, colliding on different levels" (92). Smith uses the word "thread" because it suggests a storyline that is "interwoven with and dependent upon other story threads", like threads in a fabric (95). Unlike the linear structure, which endorses a cause and effect relationship between events, the thread structure is unpredictable and open-ended: "a character abruptly disappears, a problem remains unsolved [and] events are seen through multiple perspectives" (94). *11 '09 '01*, released two years after

Amores perros, is also structured around intersecting narratives and interventions into the falling-body image.

11'09''01 is an anthology film with eleven directors from all over the world offering their initial responses to the terrorist attacks. After watching the unfolding events on television in Paris, producer and *11'09''01* creator Alain Brigand turned to his map of the world, and contemplated how these events were resonating around the globe (Riding). “The entire world shook”, he states, “but what was it thinking?” (qtd. in Riding). The chosen directors were given a maximum budget of \$400,000 and total freedom to respond, as long as these responses did not promote hate or violence, and did not attack any particular culture or religion (Riding). The event radiates out from New York to entangle with widows mourning the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia (Danis Tanović’s contribution), a Chilean exile in London remembering the coup of 11 September 1973 that overthrew President Allende (Ken Loach’s segment) and a teacher in an Afghan refugee camp trying to explain to her young pupils what had happened in New York (Samira Makhmalbaf’s film). Each film is eleven minutes, nine seconds and one frame in length, uniting these stories within a distinctly non-American date format relating to 11 September rather than September 11 or 9/11. This decision indicates that the film is resolutely global in its outlook on the aftermath of the attacks. The project’s approach unsettles the Americentric outlook of the attacks, an outlook in which this thesis has also participated by mostly focusing on American artists, authors and contributors, and also on New York as the site of the attacks. Whilst I believe this work is important in thickening the narrative of the circulation of falling-body images, I want to experiment by pushing the idea of the meshwork of falling-body images to its limits.

Before any falling people appear in *11'09''01*, however, the viewer is faced with just a black screen. The sound of voices starts to grow louder, the voices of Chamulas Indians of Chiapas, Mexico chanting a prayer for the dead, in conjunction with two flickers of people

falling lasting less than a second (Bettinger 115). As Elfi Bettinger has noted, it is some time before the viewer realises what they are actually seeing (115). Alison Young goes further by saying that with the first images, the viewer “registers more the flash of its presence and a sense of motion than any content” (41). As the film’s soundscape grows louder, it becomes clear that Iñárritu has also incorporated hundreds of “found sound” recordings from personal phone calls from the towers and video footage, to media broadcasts from all over the world (Young 41). At the beginning, a man announces that it will be a “splendid September day” and his voice is repeated, merging with the chanting prayer. The sound of a plane approaching is explained by news bulletins and a witness shouting “holy shit”, followed by a reporter exclaiming that a second plane has collided with the south tower: “the second building ... the heat, I feel the heat; the explosion is incredible”. Suddenly, a flash of an image reveals a slightly longer clip of someone falling, perhaps inviting the viewer to consider, if the reporter outside the towers can feel the heat, what the people inside the towers would have been experiencing. As the saturation of voices reaches its crescendo, with someone saying people just kept “jumping and jumping and jumping”, the film offers us longer shots of people falling. With these slower and more deliberate viewings, we can see in greater detail the way the bodies twist, turn and flail as they descend.

The shots accelerate again as an angry male voice insists vehemently: “I want the world to be afraid of us again”. This phrase is repeated alternately with the voice of another man invoking Allah, until they blend together and dissolve into a deafening clatter and a piercing buzzing sound before the film suddenly cuts to silence, and footage of both towers collapsing. Young writes that the film creates tension by entangling two structural tropes. The first of these is the “cohesion derived from its compression and acceleration of the narration of the event” as the film progresses quickly through the “before-during-and-after of the event” (42). In other words, the film seems to have a conventional narrative structure: moving

from the moment of collision to the moment of collapse. But the “reconfiguration of sound, image and editing ... pulls against” this cohesiveness (Young 42). For example, Young writes, the falling people appear before the sound of the planes colliding with towers (43). Sounds emerge without images and images appear without sounds, so that the visual and aural elements of the film dislocate each other resulting in a “destabilized viewing position” as we loop back again and again to the falling body (Young 43). Like the car crash in *Amores perros*, we return to the moment of the fall as it becomes entangled with multiple voices and narratives.

Iñárritu states that the purpose behind the film was to put himself and the audience “in the shoes of those who were inside those buildings, waiting for the unpredictable” (qtd. in “Interview with the Director”). Indeed, as the film relies so heavily on the black screen, the viewer is forced to confront their own watching, waiting face (if viewing the film on a small screen) as well as “their own imaginary” (Bettinger 116). “Located ... *within* the buildings”, Young concludes, “the images of the falling address the spectator as the one who waits (*to see what happens*)” (43). The dislocation of sound and image collapses any sense of a boundary between the viewer and the falling, forcing the viewer to intervene in the fall and absorb the impact, to become the one who waits for the fall. In her discussion of the car crash in *Amores perros*, Karen Beckman writes that in the film

the possibility of forward motion ... is constantly troubled by competing movements within the shot. Just as at the diegetic level speeding cars are brought to a halt by encounters with other cars moving in different directions, so at the formal level we repeatedly experience ... movements within the frame that, pulling in other directions, seem to peel images open, disrupting their flow. (84).

In *11 '09 '01*, too, the possibility of vertical motion, of the falling bodies colliding with the ground, is pulled in other directions by the mixture of shorter and longer shots of the fall, as well as by the entanglement of the fall with the viewer. Beckman’s description of “peeling” the image open recalls Laura Marks’ analysis of haptic visuality, which encourages the

viewer to “contemplate the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative” (163). Rather than being pulled into the narrative of descent, Iñárritu’s *11’09’’01* forces the viewer to focus on the image itself of the fall itself. This is the film’s anti-gravitational current whereby the waiting viewer “catches” the falling body, slowing the fall and expanding the possibilities of the event by peeling the image open.

Koepnick positions slowness not as the inverse of speed but an aesthetic mode that “asks viewers to take time and explore what our contemporary culture of speed rarely allows us to ask, namely what it means to live in a present that no longer knows one integrated dynamic, grand narrative, or stable point of observation” (4). Koepnick’s mode of slowness is evocative of the network narrative or thread structure of films like *Amores perros* and *11’09’’01* in that a linear, overarching storyline is replaced with multiple interweaving stories with many narrative voices, and a dislocated position for the viewer. In *Amores perros*, Iñárritu mitigates the high speed, high adrenaline instantaneity of the car crash by returning to this moment on multiple occasions, and by documenting the consequences of the crash that filter outwards from the moment itself. As Stephen Hart writes, the impact of the crash is “gradually built up in the viewer’s mind” (193). Like Keith’s slow, restorative hand movements in *Falling Man*, the viewer feels the impact of the cars in slower and gentler ways as the film unfolds. One particular chapter of Koepnick’s *On Slowness*, “Free Fall”, is especially pertinent to this thesis and explores slowness and falling in the films of German director Tom Tykwer. Tykwer’s most famous early film, *Run Lola Run* (1998), is known for its high-speed, looping sequences preceded by Lola’s red telephone receiver slowly falling back onto the main body of the phone (Schenk 74). Koepnick writes that Tykwer’s images of falling “open folds and gaps of aesthetic slowness amid the fabrics of contemporary speed and purposive mobility” creating spaces in the middle of accelerated sequences that invites characters and viewers to “pause, to suspend the relentless logics of cause and effect, to

recognize and yield to the co-presence of different dynamics of moving through time” (158). Within the logic of cause and effect, the falling bodies of 9/11 will eventually collide with the street below. Iñárritu’s vision of the fall in *11’09’’01*, however, reroutes this traumatic narrative and allows for a “derailing of catastrophic time” in order for the viewer to intervene, slow and absorb the image (Koepnick 177). Through the falling-body images, Iñárritu’s film allows for a slower, more deliberate attentiveness to the fall, allowing the viewer to yield to the pull of different movements.

Fourteen years and three feature films later, Iñárritu presents a comparable intervention into, and slowing of, the fall in *Birdman*. Although these films are different in form and production context, I suggest that the anti-gravitational current that runs through *11’09’’01* continues to run through *Birdman*. Riggan Thomson, a washed-up actor most famous for his turn as the fictional superhero Birdman, attempts a career revival by writing, directing and starring in a Broadway production of Raymond Carver’s short story “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love”. What becomes clear as the film progresses is that Riggan is increasingly harassed by the disembodied voice, and eventually the whole body, of his Birdman alter ego to the point where he seemingly starts to hallucinate that he has superpowers, including the ability to fly. The film, in comparison to *Amores perros* and *11’09’’01*, does have a more conventional and linear narrative structure in that Riggan is the film’s central character and the film is primarily concerned with his character development. As I will show, however, the film’s anti-gravitational current is created through entangled lines of movement as a result of its intertwined narratives of flying and falling. Even as the film pulls the viewer through its story with relentless speed, there are moments when the narrative splinters into multiple “threads” that interweave into the fabric of the film, thus catching and slowing the causality of the fall (Smith, “Thread Structure” 95).

With *Birdman*, we are also back in New York City, but with a director whose films have become increasingly global in perspective. *Amores perros* is “global and modern, with political issues couched in universal messages of anti-violence [and] a critique of the emptiness of fame, beauty and consumerism”, offering an image of a transnational Mexico (Shaw 110). For *Birdman*, Iñárritu also surrounds himself with a creative team from Central and Latin America, as he does in all of his films: Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki and musician Oscar Sánchez, and Argentinian screen writers Armando Bo and Nicholas Giacobone. In a similar fashion to his second feature film, *21 Grams* (2003), set in Nashville, *Birdman* is funded and distributed by an American independent company, Fox Searchlight (Tierney). In her discussion of *21 Grams*, Shaw writes that the film points to “the inability of simplistic categories of national cinema to adequately explain shifting cinematic landscapes” when “a largely ‘foreign’ crew can make an American independent film” (115). Although the principal cast in *Birdman* are nearly all American, save for Andrea Riseborough (British) and Naomi Watts (Australian), Iñárritu is the international auteur whose film can speak the language of American independent cinema with a multinational cast and crew (Shaw 133). Iñárritu’s presentation of the falling body, then, is framed by this global perspective. The meshwork of falling-body images reaches further than American producers and consumers, opening the possibility of an intervention into the falling-body image beyond a distinctly white, American perspective.

During the film’s seemingly incongruous titles, there is the briefest glimpse of dead jellyfish strewn over a beach, and then a longer shot of a flaming object flying in a stormy, black sky, before the film jumps to Riggan levitating cross-legged in his dressing room (Figures 4.2-4.4). During two separate conversations between Riggan and his ex-wife Sylvia, the meaning behind these first two shots is made clear. The first conversation occurs during rehearsals in which Riggan describes a flight from Los Angeles to New York where Riggan

was on the same plane as George Clooney. During a bad storm, as everyone started to panic, Riggan thought that, if the plane crashed, his daughter Sam would see Clooney's face on the front page of the newspaper rather than his. The flaming object in the opening credits could be the plane about to crash. The second conversation takes place after the first act on opening night when Riggan tells Sylvia that he once tried to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Pacific Ocean after they broke up, but the ocean was full of jellyfish so he pulled himself out of the water after being stung repeatedly. In both stories Riggan almost dies, but only the jellyfish story actually happens. Yet, curiously, the film presents dead jellyfish on the shore and a plane on fire, confusing the boundary between reality and fantasy: if the jellyfish are dead on the shore, how could they have stung Riggan? If the plane is on fire, how could Riggan have survived? If he survived the plane crash, is that because he is, in fact, Birdman and he can fly? Or, as Dolores Tierney observes, are these actually opening clips from a Birdman film, with Riggan as Birdman streaking across the sky? *Birdman* does not tell the audience whether to believe the jellyfish they see down on the shore or the fireball they see when they look up into the sky. Consequently, when we see Riggan levitating, we can no longer be sure that he is not. The principles of causation have been disrupted and "[a]nything goes from here on out" (Iñárritu qtd. in Fear).

This disruption becomes increasingly important as the play and Riggan's state of mind begin to unravel, his "hallucinations" growing ever more wild and dangerous. After a night of drinking, Riggan wakes up in a doorway and we see Birdman in physical form for the first time, taunting Riggan as he walks down the street and encouraging him to return to the Birdman franchise. Suddenly, Riggan begins to rise up, floating to the top of an apartment building. People stare up as he lands on the edge of the roof, and a concerned man tries to escort Riggan back downstairs. Riggan, however, jumps off the ledge and soars, arms outstretched, around the buildings before he flies above a busy road, following a line of taxis

below back to the theatre (Figures 4.5-4.13). He floats down gently, and enters the building, followed by an irate taxi driver demanding a fare. The sequence is markedly different to most of the film, where characters move swiftly into and out of shot, and the film itself has the appearance of being taken in one single shot. The flying sequence, however, slows the relentless pace of the film, even if only for two minutes, with extended shots of Riggan's euphoric face, and the air as it fills and expands his trench coat, attesting to the film's buoyant anti-gravitational current. There is a rational explanation for what happens. Riggan has climbed the stairs to the top of the building and people are staring up because they think Riggan might jump, not because he has levitated. Riggan then actually walks down the stairs of the building and takes a taxi to the theatre, forgetting to pay. The flying narrative may all be a figment of Riggan's imagination. As the opening moments of the film show, however, the implausible may be true (the burning plane thread) whilst the plausible narrative (the jellyfish thread) is the dream or fantasy. This dual narrative is exemplified by the woman who shouts "is this for real or are you shooting a film?" as Riggan stands on the roof of the building. The film sets up a complex tangle of falling, flying and floating that condenses around the doubled bodies of Riggan/Birdman. This tangle is the film's anti-gravitational current, rerouting the falling body through intersecting lines of other movements. Rather than following the causality of falling with the body colliding with the ground, the film slows the fall through its entanglement with flying and floating bodies in order to force the viewer to contemplate and absorb the image of the moving body.

The enmeshment of fantasy and fact in the film that plays out in both the opening and flying sequences is key to understanding the ending of the film. After unsuccessfully attempting suicide on stage by shooting himself in the head, Riggan is in hospital after extensive facial surgery to reconstruct his nose. The bandages on his face, and his new nose, resemble his Birdman mask. Sam and Riggan appear to make amends when they embrace but

when she leaves the room, Riggan takes off his bandages, finding his alter ego in the bathroom, moves to the window, looking down, then looks up before climbing out. Mirroring these movements, Sam returns and heads to the open window, looking down as if she expects to see Riggan's body on the ground below, and then she slowly looks up into the sky and smiles to the sound of birds calling (Figures 4.14-4.19). These upward and downward glances return us to the opening shots of the film: do we look up to the burning plane and Riggan flying or do we look down to Riggan dying and the jellyfish? The film is, according to *Rolling Stone* writer David Fear, "about an actor free-falling through an existential crisis" who can also be seen "flying throughout New York City". It is a "stunning example of how our divided selves falter and fall, or merge and soar" (Burkman 9). In this moment, however, Riggan is falling *and* flying. There are two narrative threads at work here: suicidal Riggan who jumps out of the window and falls to his death, and supernatural Riggan who jumps and flies with the birds. These threads are inextricable from each other, preventing a conclusive ending to the film. Sam is the film's Lianne, acting as a "photosensitive surface", recording and absorbing the "body come down" which could be so many bodies, keeping the possibilities for the falling-body image open, multiple and changing (DeLillo 233). For our understanding of the falling-body image, the anti-gravitational current running through *11'09''01* and *Birdman* speaks to the uncomfortable entanglement of joy and tragedy, life and death, in images of falling, running through the movements of Luke Jerram, Philippe Petit, the WTC BASE jumpers, and all the way back to Drew's photograph.³³

³³ "We will never fly, of course", says Petit, "but there is something in us that makes us want to, so those who are traveling in mid-air, in a way, carry our hopes and dreams of flying" (qtd. in Myrvold 143). The "corollary" to this perspective of the body in mid-air, writes C. Johnston, "is the terror that accompanies seeing bodies that were forced into that space in the air" (34). In representations of Petit's act after 9/11, like Riggan's double narrative, the dream of flying and the fear of falling become inextricably entwined.

4.3 “Beauty and death can’t be separated”: The Golden Gate Bridge

4.3.1 *The Golden Gate Bridge and the Suicidal Body*

Since the Golden Gate Bridge opened in 1937, there have been over 1500 confirmed suicide jumps from the site, with the actual number likely to be nearer 2000 (Bateson 8). According to John Bateson, a suicide prevention advocate, the bridge is the only international landmark, which is also a suicide destination, without a suicide barrier (8). The “easily surmountable, four-foot-high railing, year-round pedestrian access, fame, and beauty”, he continues, renders suicide by jumping from the bridge both straightforward and alluring (8-9). In his book *The Final Leap: Suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge* (2012), the first book written on the subject of the bridge suicides, Bateson is clear about his intention: to educate those who have little understanding about the scale of the suicide rate and to instil a sense of urgency about the need for a higher barrier or other form of suicide prevention (12). Part of the reason for this lack of awareness, he explains, is that people do not want to believe that “the extraordinary, spell-binding, one-of-a-kind bridge” is “blemished” by people choosing to end their lives at the exact same location (13). The bridge’s beauty, Bateson writes, its “splendor, grace, and technological triumph”, is a reminder for those who have lost someone to the bridge or seen someone jump “of a deep, never-ending hurt”, concluding that at the Golden Gate Bridge “[b]eauty and death can’t be separated” (Bateson 21).

In 2003, Tad Friend, staff writer for the *New Yorker*, wrote “Jumpers: The fatal grandeur of the Golden Gate Bridge”. Like the two films that this chapter will turn to presently, “Jumpers” attends to multiple stories that surround the bridge from political protesters who jumped and died to those who jumped and survived to the families left behind. Friend even includes the anecdote of Reverend Jim Jones appearing at a 1977 rally for the installation of an anti-suicide barrier on the bridge, before ordering the adherents of his People’s Temple to drink grape juice mixed with potassium cyanide, killing over nine

hundred people, just eighteen months later. Friend attests to the “fatal grandeur” of the bridge and to the fact that many locals are opposed to any kind of suicide prevention because they harbour a certain pride in the bridge as a “monument to death”. The first known suicide from the bridge, both Friend and Bateson agree, was Harold Wobber, a forty-seven year old First World War veteran who jumped just ten weeks after the bridge opened in August 1937. He reportedly told a stranger, “This is as far as I go” before jumping and since then, as Friend writes, his “flight path has become well worn”.

“Jumpers” also garnered further cultural currency, inspiring the 2005 song, also called “Jumpers”, by all-women alternative band Sleater-Kinney. Guitarist and vocalist Carrie Brownstein wrote the song whilst living in San Francisco. After reading Friend’s article, Brownstein wanted to write about the bridge as something that “signifies architectural prowess and structure and solidity and progress” and is also “a place of despair” (Brownstein). The lyrics of the song speak to this seeming contradiction:

There is a bridge adored and famed
The golden spine of engineering
Whose back is heavy with my weight [...]
My falling shape will draw a line
Between the blue of sea and sky.
I’m not a bird, I’m not a plane. (“Jumpers”).

Just as in the case of Philippe Petit and the WTC buildings, the body in “Jumpers” is entwined with the “spine” of the bridge. The falling body drawing a line as it falls finds a parallel with the slowly moving body following an anti-gravitational current, and also the “well worn” path through the air made by the bodies falling from the bridge. The last line, as well as referring to the original *Superman* franchise, also resonates with Iñárritu’s intertwining of flying and falling, as well as its references to superheroes and superpowers. Further, the song’s music video maintains this slippery line that runs through flying and falling. Inspired by a video of birds flying and by a flying kite, an office worker escapes her

mundane life by using the windows of envelopes to create a pair of wings. She jumps from the roof of her office building and flies over the city. Images of flying birds and the city merge with those of the band performing (Figures 4.20-4.24). In the same way as the portrayal of Riggan Thomson in *Birdman*, the “Jumpers” music video entangles falling and flying, suicide and revitalisation. The video, like the work of Carolee Schneemann, also provides an “explicitly female” intervention into the falling-body image through its presentation of the falling/flying woman (Schneider 36). Like Boxall’s “muddy back lane” that runs through texts that seem to have nothing to do with the September 2001 attacks but can still have something valuable to say about the event, this chapter moves from New York to the other side of the country, and from tall buildings to a tall bridge. Further, like the anti-gravitational current running through *Birdman* and *11'09''01* articulated by a Mexican director with an international perspective, the two films I discuss here, *The Joy of Life* and *The Bridge*, present marginalised falling bodies through the figure of the suicide.

The Joy of Life (2005) is a semi-autobiographical film comprised of multiple narratives interweaved over images of San Francisco’s streets, buildings and landmarks, including the bridge. A narrator, voiced by artist Harriet “Harry” Dodge, relates three seemingly unrelated stories: her own arrival in California and adjustment to life in San Francisco, the suicide of her friend Mark and the history of the Golden Gate Bridge and its suicides. Although the film does not directly feature a suicide, Olson weaves these stories together and into the very fabric of the city and the bridge. By contrast, Steel and his team documented the bridge for the entirety of 2004 under the guise of capturing “the powerful, spectacular intersection of monument and nature that takes place every day at the Golden Gate Bridge”, when they had actually filmed people committing suicide and had also interviewed some of their families and friends (Steel qtd. in Feinstein). In these films, the 9/11 jumpers are neither directly represented nor geographically proximate, but by making

the suicidal body a significant and tangible element of their shots of the city, these films “catch” at the movements of the falling bodies of the WTC through their explorations of falling after 2001, pushing the limits of the meshwork but preventing the 9/11 “jumpers” from disappearing altogether. These films speak to the anxiety surrounding the representation of the falling-suicide in the years since the attacks, as well as the enmeshment of the falling body with the city and the anti-gravitational, joyous current running through the fall-to-death itself.

Gary Morris writes that Olson’s film appears “schizoid” at first: “Is this one film or two? Or three? A paean to the beauty of San Francisco? A dyke’s diary of love and sex in the urban wild? An anti-tribute to the Golden Gate Bridge and the 1300+ deaths it’s facilitated?” The shots of the city, courtesy of cinematographer Sophia Constantinou, are often unnervingly still and quiet. This empty landscape, Morris writes, mirrors the film’s lonely interior landscapes of failing relationships and suicidal bodies. Even though the bridge stands as a representation of engineering prowess and triumph over the impossible, in Olson’s film the bridge presides over a city that is almost completely empty. In the first section of the film, the narrator recounts tales of her loves and losses whilst the film presents shots of the city. Periodically, these shots include the Golden Gate Bridge in the distance (Figures 4.25-4.27). The narrator articulates her loneliness, watching couples in love with “envy and adoration”: “Always the pessimist”, she continues when she describes meeting someone, “I know my advances will be welcomed or rejected and either way I’ll still be profoundly alone”. The narrator’s incompatibility with those around her is highlighted by a date with her girlfriend Casey to see a Frank Capra film, which Casey hated but the narrator loved. The narrator feels isolated as she navigates this new city. The first section segues into the second when the narrator asserts “She didn’t call. She never calls” over the image of the bay and the bridge,

weaving the narrator's lonely isolated body into the fabric of the city, and the bridge, itself (Figure 4.28).

A condensed version of the film's narrative appears in an article by Olson for the *San Francisco Chronicle* in January 2005. Olson demonstrates that all arguments against building a suicide prevention barrier have been dismantled. One particular line is replicated almost exactly in the film: "In the decade since Mark's death, I have alternately avoided the bridge and felt compelled to discover more about it. What I've learned is simple, true and deeply melodramatic. If there had been a suicide barrier on the bridge, Mark would probably still be alive today" ("Power Over Life and Death"). Like Bateson's *The Final Leap* and Tad Friend's article, Olson's work is clear in its support for much greater suicide prevention at the site. In a similar fashion, too, to Sleater-Kinney's "Jumpers", Olson's film navigates the complex terrain of acknowledging the bleakness of the falling suicide whilst also exploring the compelling, irresistible pull of the bridge. But connecting these three seemingly disparate stories in *The Joy of Life*, as well as the beauty and death inextricable from the bridge, is the image of the body as it falls through these entangled narratives: the narrator as her life begins to spiral out of control, Mark's body as she recounts his suicide and the bodies of all those who have jumped from the bridge.

Although *The Bridge* actually shows the falling body, Steel's film also documents the rippling intersections of bodies surrounding the suicide. It is the film's representation of the falling-suicide, however, that has drawn intense criticism. The source of this criticism is partly the fact that Steel did not inform the interviewees that their loved ones' suicides had been caught on camera. The reason behind this decision, Steel explains, was concern that if the project became public knowledge there would be a spike in suicides as there had been when the number of suicides at the bridge was close to reaching 1000 (Steel qtd. in BBC Collective interview). Furthermore, in response to objections raised about filming people

jump without doing anything to stop their deaths, Steel asserts that the crew had the police department and coast guard on speed dial on their phones, and consequently prevented six jumps (qtd. in Savlov). Despite these statements, however, many still determined that *The Bridge* was an ethical failure not only with regards to Steel's deceptive means of gaining a filming permit but also to his responsibility for the welfare of the families and friends he interviewed (Winston 622). In a damning critique of the film, Brian Winston writes that whilst Friend's *New Yorker* essay highlights the need for a suicide barrier, Steel's film is about "watching mentally ill people die and hearing from their close ones how their deaths could be explained" whilst also overlooking broader issues such as mental health and even explicit references to the need for suicide prevention (622). He concludes "watching people die" is a much better subject to secure financial backing for a film than a "public safety issue" (623). Others also insisted that the film buys into and reiterates the romanticised element of dying by jumping from the bridge. Dr Madelyn Gould, a suicide prevention expert at Columbia University, states that "[t]here are times that suicide is presented as mysterious, as appealing and as inevitable, and those are messages that we absolutely do not want anyone to share" (qtd. in "The Bridge of Death"). She continues, "[i]t's a pity Mr Steel didn't make the deaths more unattractive" (qtd. in Feinstein). In "Jumpers", Friend vividly refutes the idea that the bridge offers a clean, beautiful death: "Eighty-five per cent of them [jumpers] suffer broken ribs, which rip inward and tear through the spleen, the lungs, and the heart. Vertebrae snap, and the liver often ruptures". In *The Bridge*, every jumper disappears into the water and we only see the recovery of one body, Elizabeth "Lisa" Smith, by the coast guard.³⁴ As a

³⁴ The fact that the only body discovered is that of a woman (also the only female suicide discussed in the film) is particularly important. As Michele Aaron writes, the representation of female suicide in films like *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) and *The House of Mirth* (2000) is cited on "the enduring – and recycling – erotic economy of the to-be-dead woman as beloved spectacle, muse and, or rather as, inevitable projection of male desire and despair" (52). Rather than a figure of disappearance, however, Lisa's suicide in *The Bridge* is the film's only instance of the re-appearing body, pulled lifeless from the water, complicating the image of the beautiful and ethereal female suicide.

result, it could be argued that the film presents suicide by jumping as an easy leap out of this world and into the next.

In a more positive reflection of the ways the film collocates suicide and beauty, Stephen Holden writes in his review for the *New York Times* that the film's juxtaposition of "transcendent beauty and personal tragedy" intimates that "people's hopes of ending psychic suffering by moving to a more pleasant place may be futile" and that "suicidal impulses" may follow these people to "the place of salvation". Although *The Bridge* does not document the horrific damage to the body of the suicide, the film does attend to what Steel calls "the ripple": "there's this big splash and within minutes it's like nothing ever happened. All the ripples go away. And the traffic keeps moving and the pedestrians are walking and the water's going under the bridge. But for the families, the ripple keeps going forever" (qtd. in Bateson 75). In the rhetoric of the film, most of the bodies of the jumpers disappear into the water without a trace, but it is the families and friends of victims who bear the ripping and destructive force of their jump. The only thing that may be left of a person after they jump is "a ripple that may be felt for generations" (Bateson 79). The film is undoubtedly problematic but to conclude that it is just about "watching people die" is also problematic (Winston 623). It is in Steel's "ripples" that we can find the true merit of the film, ripples that swell outwards encountering other bodies, and both the beauty and the tragedy of the bridge.

In their shots of city and bridge, both films document this interrelationship of body and structure. Morris finds echoes of the city symphony genre in Olson's film. The city symphony emerged in the 1920s and early 1930s capturing various cities at the moment of accelerated technological, industrial and cultural change. This specific moment occurred at a "high point of capitalist modernity" and during the "expansion of mass consumer culture" (Skvirksy 426). The paradigm of the city symphony, such as Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (*Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*) (1927), documented a "day in

the life of the city” from the city’s “early morning ‘sleeping’ streets” to its “‘waking up’ as the streets begin to fill with people on their way to work” and finally its “after-work diversions” (Skvirksy 426). Olson’s film follows the “dawn to dusk format” of the city symphony with a peaceful opening shot of clouds over the bay, just a ship and the trees moving to show that it is a film rather than a still image, and a closing night-time shot showing the lights of passing cars and occupied houses (Graf 78) (Figures 4.29 and 4.30). Related shorter film poems like *De brug* (*The Bridge*) (1928) by Dutch filmmaker Joris Ivens, which documents the movements of the Rotterdam vertical-lift railroad bridge, record “the rhythms and forms, motions and varying perspectives of this industrial technology, capturing the modes of vision and seeing occasioned by this structure” (Bould 54, Gunning 107). Director and film theorist Germaine Dulac wrote of *De brug* that it is a “moving symphony, with harmonies, chords, grouped in several rhythms” (qtd. in Marcus 108). Although *The Bridge* is punctuated by the talking head documentary technique, the film is also concerned with the “life” of the bridge. In the opening shot, the bridge emerges from thick fog in bright sunshine and, at the end of the film, the bridge fades to black as the names of all those who jumped from the bridge in 2004 appear (Figures 4.31 and 4.32). The film’s documentation of the many rhythms of life that occur at the bridge, from falling to running to walking to playing, lend themselves to an understanding of *The Bridge* as a symphonic entanglement of movements, rhythms and stories.

Berlin is saturated with movement: trains, people, and industry. Everything in the city is in perpetual motion. As Morris suggests, however, *The Joy of Life* can be seen as an inversion of the city symphony as it freezes “the earlier films’ view of modern urban life as pleasurable chaos into a kind of still-life version of the Big City”, “echoing the film’s theme of a world of physical and emotional isolation”. Unlike the shots in Ruttmann’s *Berlin*, Constantinou’s shots are markedly slow, lingering over streets and buildings for so long that

the scenes have the appearance of “still-life” photographs. Although *The Bridge* does show people jumping from the bridge, as well as walking and running along its length, these are not all fast movements shown through multiple cuts. Instead, the camera follows the figure of Gene Sprague, in particular, as he meanders up and down the bridge, returning periodically to him from the beginning to the end of the film, when he jumps. The film also offers longer shots of the bridge, the fog, the water and people standing at the railing. At one point, an older man in a black jacket, alone at the railing, crosses himself as he looks out over the bay, the camera and audience waiting to see if he will jump. The next shot is of a man laughing and talking on the phone, who suddenly takes off his glasses, climbs over the railing and crosses himself before jumping. The fall is quick, with the camera failing to keep up with the man as he plummets over the side, but his fall is caught by, and entangled with, contrasting planes of movement on the bridge in the same way that the falling body in *Falling Man* is caught by Keith’s slow hand movements. The film directly parallels the slow, deliberate shots of the older man crossing himself with the sudden movements of the man that jumped.

Olson takes these two characters from the quintessential city symphony film, the lonely, suicidal body and the urban landscape, and interweaves them in her own narrative. The film is bookended by an instrumental piece called “Coastline Rag” by jazz pianist, poet, filmmaker, all around “20th-century Renaissance guy”, and suspected Golden Gate suicide, Weldon Kees (Olson “Kees Kino”). In July 1955, police discovered Kees’ abandoned car on the north end of the bridge along with the car of a salesman who had left a note telling of the failure of his business (Reidel 5). Like Olson’s friend Mark, Kees’ body was never found (Kramer). In his Kees profile piece for the *New Yorker*, Anthony Lane writes that following the trail left by Kees “always leads to the same place”:

Not to the movies, or to the paintings; not to the short stories, or to the fruitless novels; not even to the poems, the crucible and crown of his achievement. Instead, we are led ad infinitum: to the Golden Gate, and to the empty Plymouth; to what did or

did not happen next, and so to the reflection, as in a rearview mirror, of all that had come before.

James Reidel, writing in his biography of Kees, seems to share the same frustration concerning the shadow of the bridge that lingers over the rest of Kees' life:

The image I have of him ... is not of the man staring into the churning water of the bay under the Golden Gate Bridge ... I was ... asked what it was like to be Kees's biographer. It was ... more like working with shattered glass than with the picture of a body hitting the water. (xiii-xiv).

In other words, both Lane and Reidel were keen to piece together the fragments of Kees' varied and mysterious life rather than just focus on his infamous death. Once again, as in the ending of *Birdman*, the image of the falling suicide is shrouded in the narrative, shattered or retrospective, of the person's life. In the same way that *The Bridge* attends to the ripples of the suicide through its effect on the families and friends of those who jumped, the inclusion of Kees' work in *The Joy of Life* entangles the suicidal body within a meshwork of interconnecting narratives and movements.

Olson herself contributed to encouraging a greater understanding of Kees as a person and as an artist. In 2006 she curated an exhibition of Kees' film work for the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco ("Kees Kino"). One of these films, a film poem for the Golden Gate Bridge, called *The Bridge*, was filmed in the same year as his disappearance. Kees had started work on *The Bridge* with photographer, filmmaker and friend William Heick. In a similar fashion to *The Joy of Life*, the film consists of images of the bridge combined with a reading of a selection of Hart Crane's poetry. Kees was increasingly preoccupied with Crane's own suicide jump from a steamship (Reidel 3). Heick completed the film after Kees' disappearance, with one shot showing Kees descending a hill carrying camera equipment, presumably to film the bridge, and growing larger as he walks down, followed by a shot of waves lapping at the shore. These images are narrated by the following lines from Crane's "Voyages V":

But now, draw in your head, alone and too tall here.
 Your eyes already in the slant of drifting foam.
 Your breath sealed by the ghosts I do not know.
 Draw in your head, and sleep the long way home.

Kees, “alone and too tall” for this world, disappears into the bay waters (Steiner). This moment predates the work of Olson and Steel but Heick’s editing arrangement also aims to underline the individual identities of those who jumped from the bridge, even if their bodies are never recovered from the water. Within this framing of Kees’ suspected falling suicide, Heick’s film’s narrative depicts Kees doing what he loved, and Crane’s poem with its imagery of “drifting foam” and sleep seems to offer a notion of lifting, floating peace to intervene in the momentary plummet from the bridge.

Although Olson’s film does not make explicit reference to Kees’s suicide, the inclusion of his work thickens the meshwork of falling bodies that *The Joy of Life* unveils. The first section of the film segues into the second when the screen goes black and Lawrence Ferlinghetti reads his poem “The Changing Light” about the city’s “island light”: “And in that vale of light / the city drifts / anchorless upon the ocean” (8). San Francisco is not an island but Ferlinghetti’s description of the city itself as body floating in the water likens it to the bridge suicide. In *The Bridge*, Wally and Mary Manikow discuss the suicide of their son, Philip, who had planned his jump from the bridge for months: “Some people say the body is a temple, well he thought his body was a prison, and his mind. He knew he was loved, he knew he had everything, could do anything, and yet he felt trapped. That was the only way he could get free”. Like the car crash in *Amores perros*, the violence and trauma of Philip’s death is felt slowly and gently as a result of its ripples through those who loved him. Both films use different techniques to catch at the figure of the suicide by entangling the falling body within intervening narratives, slowing the fall to consider its effect on others and rendering the suicide a visible and tangible element of the bridge and the city. Kees in the drifting foam; Philip free from the confines of his body; the city itself floating in the water; these images

indicate a buoyancy inextricably entwined with the death plunge. Although it is problematic to consider sensations of happiness or freedom in relation to a person falling to their death, we only have to look at Tom Junod's article to see him suggest that the person in Drew's photograph "might very well be flying". The falling-body image is what it is, I suggest, because it is caught by two contrasting but connected bodies: the joyful, ecstatic body that flies or floats and the body falling to death. These are the seemingly contradictory narratives running through the heart of falling itself.

4.3.2 *The Golden Gate Bridge and the Joyous Body*

In her exploration of images of falling before 9/11, Eleanor Kaufman describes the significance of the falling body in French novelist Georges Perec's *W, or the Memory of Childhood* (1975). Perec presents a semi-autobiographical account of his childhood and his life after the Second World War as a member of the parachute troops. When he first jumps from a plane, he remembers the last time he saw his mother before she was killed during the Holocaust: she took him to the train station and gave him a Charlie Chaplin comic in which a parachute is attached to Chaplin's trouser braces (54). "In the very instant of jumping" the narrator sees "one way of deciphering the text of this memory": "I was plunged into nothingness; all the threads were broken; I fell, on my own, without support. The parachute opened. The canopy unfurled, a fragile and firm suspense before the controlled descent" (55). Leaving his mother felt like all the strings of his parachute had been severed, but the memory is both recalled and answered by the parachute jump sixteen years later as he is buoyed by the threads of the parachute, as well as the memory. Kaufman writes that the "memory of the comic book and its association with the mother's departure was always written onto Perec's body, as were the unrecovered bodies of his parents" (52). "While this network of linkages and interconnections is unquestionably traumatic", Kaufman continues, "it is ...

simultaneously a source of exhilaration, and this exhilaration is inseparably linked to the trauma and to surviving it” (52). The bodies of Olson’s narrator, the suicides in *The Bridge*, Riggan, Sam, Lianne and Keith, falling in their own ways, are also caught and slowed like a parachute unfurling by the joy of flying and floating, of loved ones surviving and of the body taken to the extreme of movement.

The fall to death framed by the joyous fall creates a new narrative surrounding the falling suicide in *The Joy of Life* and *The Bridge*. Kaufman further explains the concept of the “happy fall”:

In this sense, joy results from an intricate connection of mind and body that is attuned to some other body. This other joy-inducing body need not be a human one but could in fact be something that falls from the sky. What is significant is that this outside body is something other than oneself. The happy fall, then, might be redefined as the falling from the sky of something – an object, a person, an event – that brings the mind and body of the person impacted into a sharper if not epiphanal connection. (52).

She continues that an “outer fall” of something from the sky finds a parallel in an “inner fall of the self” which is traumatic, but which also contains “the potential for a joyous leaping of the self”, a “jump for joy ... coterminous with falling” (52). When the protagonist of *W* falls with his parachute, traumatic memories of his mother resurface, as well as the exhilarating joy of falling and remembering. In Steel’s and Olson’s films, trauma and joy are inextricably linked through the suicide of Mark and the various people in *The Bridge* and, as I will now show, an “inner fall” which includes a leaping for joy. Olson’s narrator feels a connection to the falling suicide by her own desires to fall in love and to be happy. Similarly, Steel presents the Golden Gate Bridge as a site of both the despair of suicide and the exhilaration of life. In this way, both films present falling bodies at the site which encounter buoyant or joyous bodies.

In *The Joy of Life*, Ferlinghetti’s poem leads into the second section of the film where the narrator turns towards the intricacies of the cityscape to understand her own “emotional

landscape” (Morris). One of the city’s old hotels, so “antithetical to the concept of home” yet still dignified, called The Hotel Potter reminds her of a “lost set from an old Frank Capra movie”. Immediately, the tumultuousness of the narrator’s personal life finds a parallel in the city’s decaying buildings. The narrator’s isolation from the people around her (represented by the comment about seeing the Capra film on a date) finds an echo in the city itself. The narrator does not feel at home and the city cannot be a home. As if this description pulls at a thread in the narrator’s memory, she begins to explain the complex editing process of Capra’s *Meet John Doe* (1941). In the initial story, she recounts, the John Willoughby character did commit suicide in order to save his reputation. Other versions of the story had an unfinished ending, a political allegory of suicide as protest and a planned suicide on Christmas Eve as opposed to Independence Day. In the end, the film concluded with Ann Mitchell convincing Willoughby to live because the first John Doe died already, 2000 years before, ending in “an orgy of over-the-top Christian allegory” as Olson’s narrator remarks. She subsequently asks, as the first direct frame of the Golden Gate Bridge appears: “What is it that we need in an ending? Tied up plot lines, evidence of some meaning behind the story, a moral, a punchline, a suicide?” (Figure 4.28). Through these interlinking narratives, highlighted by condensation points such as the references to Capra, Olson adds to the meshwork of suicidal bodies and stories circulating her narrator. These interlinking lines range from a personal anecdote to a wider cultural history but, as a result of the film’s symphony of the city, all come to bear on the bridge.

Olson’s film is saturated with these doubled narratives and intricate connections. Even the title of the film itself seems to have two origins. Ten minutes into the film, there is a shot of an old advertisement painted on the back of the Crystal Hotel on Eddy Street for Omar Cigarettes with the slogan “the joy of life” (Figure 4.33). At the end of the film, however, there appears the following quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *The Sorrows of*

Young Werther, in which Werther commits suicide: “Whatever be my fate hereafter, I can never say that I have not tasted joy – the purest joy of life” (Figure 4.34). In the film’s narrative, then, “the joy of life” connotes both commodified luxury and bittersweet realisation. Similarly, the bridge is a “ubiquitous reminder” for the narrator “of what’s best and worst in this world”: it is a “triumph of engineering and spectacular art deco design” and also “a terrifying, almost apocalyptic structure – a man-made steel cliff that serves as a virtual end of the earth for the desperate souls wanting to leave this world with a flourish”. The bridge rings with Jack Kerouac’s “end of land sadness”, as the narrator observes, which is counterpoised by “end of world gladness” in his piece “October in the Railroad Earth” (144). Similarly, in his poem “The Cool, Grey City of Love”, George Sterling writes of San Francisco:

And her mightier caress
Is joy and the pain thereof;
 And great is thy tenderness,
 O cool, grey city of love! [emphasis added].

The city inspires sadness and pain, and gladness and joy; the bridge is both a terror and a triumph; the falling/flying body renders the bridge a means to the end of life and a celebration of life itself. Olson’s narrative, as well as “October” and “City of Love”, interweaves diverging narratives of grief and joy. The bridge in *The Joy of Life* is at once a symbol for the sad plummet and for buoyant happiness. The city, Kees, Olson’s narrator, Mark and all the other people who jumped from the bridge are all implicated in the film’s meshwork of joy and sadness.

The opening sequence of *The Bridge* incorporates similar interconnecting lines of experience: the joy of life and life coming to an end. These introductory shots introduce the bridge as a site of flourishing life: birds flying, a kite surfer, a group of people on a boat trip, a man fishing (Figures 4.35-4.38). Further, there are shots of people walking along the

bridge: a man takes photographs of the water below, a family peer over the edge, a child climbs up the railings and his mother flings an arm protectively across his chest. Other people wondering along the sidewalk will eventually jump including, as I have noted, Gene Sprague and a man talking on the phone (Figures 4.39 and 4.40). It is the man in green, however, who is the first in the film to climb over the edge. There are only 15 seconds between the man lifting one leg over the railing and hitting the water (Figures 4.41-4.46). The camera shakily follows the man's descent into the water, and finally the huge splash his body creates on impact. The camera lingers on the grey water until a kite-surfer cuts through the ripples and the title of the film appears (Figure 4.47). It is unclear whether the man falling and the man kite-surfing occur at the same time, or whether this opening sequence is the result of effective editing, but the resulting juxtaposition is particularly telling for the rest of the film.

The editing makes it appear that the collision of the man's fall with the water "ripples" outwards to touch two kite surfers who saw someone jump. Chris Brown and Eric Geleynse, avid kite-surfers, describe seeing someone fall into the water from the bridge as they surfed. Brown recounts how he felt after the coast guard had arrived and he began to ride back to shore:

I was thinking about how that person was at the lowest of the low of their life, obviously, and how the whole day all I could think about "it's gonna be a good day to go out and kite and my passion sport [sic]", and here at the same time, you know, I'm reaching, you know, for what I love to do, and this person's ending their life.

Brown's account juxtaposes the person who plummeted to his death with the surfer "reaching" for what he loves, re-enacting the same interconnection of falling and buoyancy featured in Perec's narrative. Geleynse continues in this same vein: "Kiting ... is a real celebration of life: it's exhilarating; it's thrilling; it's just awesome. So it's a real juxtaposition of celebration of life and ending of life". These words are spoken over footage of a surfer leaping and spinning over the waters of the bay, underneath the bridge, on a

different day (Figures 4.48-4.50). The grey water into which the man in green plunges is replaced by blue skies and sunshine. The bodies of the surfers, buoyed by the fabric of the kite like the parachute in *W*, are representative of the joy or celebration of life, but also intersect the body of the falling suicide. Their lines of movement interconnect in the water of San Francisco Bay. The surfers have fallen in love with the feeling of soaring, floating and falling back towards the water.

As Winston observes, Gene is the first person we see on the bridge, and his jump concludes the film (624). His friends describe him as “not of this world”, a man who repeatedly made comments about killing himself and longed above all to be loved. Gene was filmed by Steel and his team for ninety minutes on the 11 May 2004, and the film itself is ninety minutes long. “[T]he chronotime of the film”, writes Winston, “matches the chronology of his last minutes on earth” (624). The film returns to Sprague periodically throughout the film, following him as he walks up and down the bridge, heightening the anticipation as more and more people jump. Winston writes, rather dismissively, that the frequent returns to Sprague on the bridge set up “a classic hermeneutic: is he a ‘jumper’? Will he jump? He does. The end” (624). If we think instead of ripples and enmeshed bodies, however, Gene has the largest number of interviewed friends (four: Caroline Pressley, Dave Williams, and Matt and Jen Rossi) discussing his life for the longest amount of time. Whereas the interviews with families of other victims, both recorded and unrecorded jumps, appear in isolated segments (for instance, Lisa is discussed at the beginning of the film and Philip’s parents appear in the middle), Gene’s narrative spans the entire length of the film. His walk intersects the stories of every other person filmed or discussed. He even appears at the start of bridge jump survivor Kevin Hines’ story as an alternative vision to the survival narrative. His jump sequence is unique in the film, too, as the camera manages to track his body as he falls, not unlike Drew’s camera panning down with the body of the person falling

from the WTC (Figures 4.51-4.57). Before he jumps, his friend Caroline offers the film's final words: "Why he chose the bridge? I don't know, maybe there's a certain amount of release from pain by pain. *Maybe he just wanted to fly one time*" (emphasis added). Gene stands on the railing, brushes off his hands, and then falls backward, plunging towards the water headfirst. After colliding with the water, a flock of birds flies across the water's surface. In a similar fashion to the beginning of the film, and also the final sequence in *Birdman*, the body falling to death is entangled with the living, flying and free body. Gene's fall, like Riggan's, is caught and slowed by the wings of birds and the love of those close to him. Although Gene falls to his death in four seconds, he is falling through a meshwork of bodies that complicates the link between the fall and death. In her analysis of images of death in film, Michele Aaron underlines the way that the suicidal body is transformed from the "to-be-dead" into the "dead-already" (61). *The Bridge*, whilst still detailing the ripping, destructive force of the suicide as it ripples through the lives of families and friends, entangles the falling body within intersecting lines of movement that also include trajectories of joy and life.

The final lines of *The Joy of Life* are a lasting testament to this entanglement of the joy and tragedy of falling. Spoken over a shot of San Francisco at night, lights on in buildings and cars moving to show that "[t]he city, like Dodge's emotional landscape, is not quite empty after all" (Morris) (Figure 4.30), the narrator articulates these diverging but also complementary sensations:

You fall in love with a girl, with a lot of girls, you fall in love with this city. You fall in love with falling in love, and you dive. Over and over again, you dive to experience the feeling of falling, wilfully, intentionally, recklessly. You notice everything: the wind is blowing, the light is just so, the sadness in you is just so. It's also exquisitely bittersweet and almost unbearable, but it's not. You come back to this state again and again, and although it's melodramatic, this heightened sense of emotion is so real and so clear compared to the muddy discomfort of the rest of your life, you just keep coming back to it. There's nothing like it. In the moment of desiring and being desired, you actually know that you are okay.

As Chris Chang writes in his review of the film, what makes the “seemingly incongruous elements” of the love story and the bridge story “wax lyrical” is the moment when “Olson postulates a connection between falling in love – and falling in love with falling” (76). The “feeling of falling” is the feeling of being caught by interlacing lines of sadness and joy. The suicidal fall of her friend Mark is intertwined with the more general and universal feelings of falling: in love with someone else, in love with the city, in love with the complex motion of falling itself. In its navigation of the city and the self, Olson’s film maps the intersections of the bridge suicide and the woman in love through the image of the falling body. *The Joy of Life* and *The Bridge* offer a way of exploring the reality of suicide beyond the “lure of fiction or Hollywood”, and therefore beyond what Aaron calls the “vanishing point” or the literal and figural disappearance of the suicidal body in film (67).

Birdman, *The Joy of Life* and *The Bridge* do not explicitly reference the terrorist attacks of 2001 nor do they reference those who jumped from the towers, either directly or indirectly through geographical proximity. These are falling bodies of a different kind. Through the anti-gravitational current Boxall observes in DeLillo’s *Falling Man*, however, a space is opened that presents “a dynamic relay station of multiple and ambivalent trajectories ... a site ... at which neither causes nor movements can ever be seen as producing predictable outcomes and unambiguous effects” (Koepnick 177). By entangling narratives of buoyancy and freefall, these films provide an extreme example of the way the falling-body images I have explored in the first three chapters are caught by the entangled lines of the meshwork. In each chapter, I have attempted to slow the fall, to demonstrate how these images are falling *through* the meshwork and becoming entangled with other images sometimes far removed from any sense of an “original” context. Here, through this slow current I have established, I have shown that the event is uncontainable, reaching out and touching falling, flying and floating bodies, and therefore triggering lines of relation that might have otherwise lain

dormant. Through the framing narrative of this thesis, the falling bodies of September 2001 are caught and bound by wider, enmeshed narratives of falling, love and death. By extension, the event cannot be considered a singular moment of falling since it has always been entangled in these nebulous moments and modes of the fall.

Conclusion: “[A] whirl of catching up and being caught”

In September 2015, a team of French design students released a “narrative driven virtual reality experience” entitled “[08:46]” with the aim of allowing the viewer to “embody an office worker in the North Tower of the World Trade Center during the 9/11 events” (“[08h46]”). 08:46 a.m. is the time that American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north tower. In this experience, VR gamers assume the role of a worker trapped on one of the top floors of the north tower, who, at first, tries to find a way down with colleagues but eventually realises there is no way out. After seeing the second plane collide with the opposite tower, a small group of colleagues smash the windows and one worker jumps to his death. In several walkthrough videos of [08:46] on YouTube, gamers can also actually jump out of the window, and experience the ten second fall to the ground (Figure 5.1-5.3). One YouTube user, “DarkWolfLetsPlay”, goes through the experience once without jumping (the screen goes black inside the office) before going through the experience again, saying:

I was literally thinking of going with him [the worker that jumped]. I’m thinking of going back in and making a jump. But, at the same time, I don’t want to because that is scary ... but guess what: I’m gonna do it for you guys. So, I will see you there ... Okay, so we’re back where we were. I don’t wanna do this but here we go [sic].

The user breaks the window and launches himself out of the building, shouting “Oh my God” as he descends with the sound of air rushing past “his” falling body and police sirens in the background. The screen cuts to black as the falling body reaches the ground. The user’s walkthrough has over five million views (as of 4 December 2016).

This thesis started with the photograph of a person falling from the north tower at 9:41 a.m. and, in some ways, returns to this moment once more as another “person” jumps and falls from the north tower just after the second plane collided with the south tower at 9:03 a.m. In the fifteen years that separate the photograph and the VR experience, however, it is apparent that many things have changed. In their presentation of the falling-body image,

producer Pierre-Yves Revellin states that the team wanted to “build an emotional connection to the victims” and offer “the victims’ internal points of view ... rather than the external, televisual point of view” (qtd. in Dillon) by “diving into every testimony we can have” (qtd. in O’Neil). In the vocabulary of this thesis, [08:46] encourages an entanglement of the bodies of those who jumped with the bodies of the Oculus Rift user through the first-person perspective VR technology, creating an enmeshment of lines of movement. I consider [08:46] to be exemplary of all the falling-body images I have detailed in the main body of this thesis. To this end, [08:46] picks up on threads from each chapter of the main body of my thesis. Firstly, it locates the user at the precise place of the WTC on 11 September 2001 to show us the other side of the enmeshment of falling and walking bodies that characterise the work of Richard Drew and N.R. Kleinfield. Secondly, as a framing narrative for the falling body, [08:46] encourages an unspooling of further narratives, like the conspiracy theory and the meme, through the interventions of the artistic team, and multiple VR users. Thirdly, the graphics, albeit clunky and unsophisticated, combine with the advent of VR technology to offer a first-person perspective view of the vertical space of the towers, like the GoPro BASE jump videos and *The Walk*. Finally, the creative team behind the experience are French, and the voice actors have French accents, emphasising the WTC as a hub of global business, and the way the event and the falling-body image have spiralled further than any specific geographic parameters.

With [08:46], we may have returned to the moment of the attacks, but the VR experience demonstrates how the falling-body image has come to be an object of participation, production as well as consumption, drawing to the surface all the ways artists, journalists, directors, web users and musicians have intervened in the on-going creation of the significance of falling after 2001. As such, I have constructed an intersecting meshwork of moving lines which begins, but does not end, with Drew’s photograph as a navigational tool.

In my first chapter I outlined the largely unexplored and undervalued framings of the Associated Press and the *New York Times* as key factors for the initial widespread circulation of the photograph on 12 September 2001. The frame, I suggested, is still a valuable tool for deciphering the particular conventions that come into play when an image appears in any given context, as well as for navigating the “explosion of possibilities” for the image as a result of Internet use that is far more widespread and participatory (Pozorski 37). My work here complicates Tom Junod’s narrative of disappearance by refurnishing the story of the photograph with this first moment of publication. Furthermore, I traced the intersecting journeys of Drew and Kleinfield as they manoeuvred around the destruction and chaos of Lower Manhattan on that day to complete their respective assignments. I took the small detail that both men walked around the site and then back to their offices with their material to suggest that from the very beginning the photograph was produced and framed in movement. Through an analysis of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, I argue that the falling-body photograph becomes imbricated in the on-going formation of both personal responses to the event and of the city itself as it transforms in the wake of the attacks. This chapter provided essential groundwork for the following case studies by articulating a working definition of framing that encompassed Drew, Kleinfield and Oskar Schell as walkers who pace the lines along which the falling-body image moves.

In the second chapter, I continued my focus on individual responses to and uses of the falling-body image by asserting that the work of web users and artists frames the falling body in such a way as to create endless narratives around the falling body. Digital projects that range from web memorials to meme generation keep the possibilities for the falling body as open and unexpected as possible. Although Junod’s article is an essential element in the continuing fascination with Drew’s photograph, his reduction of the photograph into an economy of ubiquitous symbolism must be considered a framing narrative rather than an

authorised accompaniment to the falling-body image. I do not see my thesis as a corrective to Junod's narrative but a means of displacing its centrality in visual discourse of the falling-body image. I determine Junod's narrative to be an extremely prominent and under-theorised framing in the meshwork of falling-body images. "The Falling Man" became the first mainstream intervention into the falling-body images, aside from comments by the omnipresent Drew, which enacted a subjective response to the photograph. It was not the only response, however, as demonstrated by the presence of the falling-body image in personal web memorials, public and participatory memory projects, the work of Carolee Schneemann, evidence of a conspiracy and raw material for memetic content. Although these examples are all vastly different, each response was the result of a subjective intervention into the image, with particular idiosyncratic framing conventions, and created further, more personalised narratives around and through the falling-body image, precluding any sense that the photograph will ever reach a consensus meaning.

My foregrounding of individual experiences, and bodies, within the ongoing framing of the image led into the next chapter, where I explored in grounded language the thick, unruly space of intersecting lines of movement at the WTC site through its various stages of destruction and reconstruction. Through the entanglement of history, literature, journalism, film, immersive technology and, crucially, moving bodies, I articulated the WTC as a place where Philippe Petit's wire-walk, the falling bodies of 2001 and the WTC BASE jumps move with and through each other. All three events speak to the site's history of regeneration through violent means which situates the fall of the towers within a wider entanglement of buildings and bodies, without suggesting that these are static moments that can be linked like nodes in a network. Instead, my focus was placed on the lines of movement that implicated each body in the extant transformation of Lower Manhattan, and also implicated the viewer's body in the extant process of meaning-making attributed to the photograph. Through readings

of articles, texts, films and YouTube videos, I have established the site's walking, falling and floating bodies as integral elements of the site. Furthermore, immersive technologies like the GoPro camera and 3D film situate the viewer within the thick, unruly meshwork of falling bodies at the site. Through these examples, this chapter moved further outwards along the meshwork away from a specific group of photographs, attending instead to what the falling-body photograph is "accompanied and intertwined" with, and how these images reflect the ongoing creation of the WTC as place (Pink, "Sensory" 12).

My final chapter is both experimental and self-reflexive, pushing the limits of my approach and proposing that my thesis itself works as a framing narrative for the falling-body image. This last chapter brings bodies into contact with each other that might not share temporal, contextual or geographical co-ordinates, but speak to the way that all the images of falling addressed in this thesis are as concerned with the fullness of life as they are with the finality of death. In each example, from *Falling Man* to *The Bridge*, the fall-to-death is caught and buoyed by the "lines of life": the survivors, the families of those who jumped, the moments of the celebration of life at the bridge and the feeling of falling in love (Ingold, *Being Alive* 63). As Drew consistently states of his photograph, it is as much a part of the person's life as it depicts the person about to die (Stern). The expanse of the mesh I have outlined throughout this thesis also attests to the way the falling-body image has moved along these lines to intersect with widespread individuals and groups, becoming a part of the way they have responded to the attacks over the last fifteen years. As much as photographs of falling can be considered objects of trauma, they are also experiential congeries of various lines of life.

Many critical studies of falling after the 2001 terrorist attacks speak to the way that this specific group of falling bodies became entangled with falling-body images, both literal and figurative, from vastly different contexts. In particular, Aimee Pozorski's analysis of the

“explosion of possibilities” for falling bodies in written form (37) and T. Nikki Cesare Schotzko’s “fallings and *falling-throughs*” (177) underline the almost unwieldy accumulation of more and more instances of falling that seems to have both accelerated and condensed after the attacks. As a case in point, in the early stages of my research, I was sent a video by a colleague of a 2009 advertisement from environmental protest group Plane Stupid to highlight the impact of short flights to Europe from the UK on the environment. The advertisement involves animated polar bears falling from the sky and landing on the streets of a city centre, because the average European flight produces 400kg of carbon, about the weight of a female polar bear (Sweney). According to *Ad Weekly*, the advertisement is objectionable not least because of “the general airplane-skyscraper-death theme, complete with a pretty blatant 9/11 Falling Man reference” (Nudd). With the “excessive potential for references” to the event, the falling-body image becomes ever further entangled with other bodies and other trajectories of movement (Pozorski 25). Whilst Pozorski sees this excessive potential as a “problem” which contributes to “further confusion and misunderstanding surrounding the event”, I see this mesh of bodies and lines of movement as essential to understanding how we continue, and will continue, to reckon with the destruction of the towers.

Throughout this thesis, I have refocused attention toward the specific framings of each instance of the falling body, from an Associated Press photograph and *New York Times* article to Golden Gate Bridge suicide films, and also to the way that these instances become entangled in a meshwork. The work of Pozorski and Schotzko, in particular, gestures towards the way that bodies are connected through the slipperiness of language, media and falling itself but does not then seek to explain these resonances and repetitions in tangible detail. Although their approaches aim to understand the representation of the event through the plethora of texts, artworks and performances that refer to falling, my focus prioritises the

entanglement of those lines connecting bodies and texts to demonstrate the ways and means by which the event, as represented by the falling-body image, moves through our environment. As such, I have shown that the event was never a stable or discrete concept, but was instead always already enmeshed in various framing narratives. Through each chapter, I have shown how the falling body operates as part of the world in which we live, and how various technologies, practices and techniques have sought to bring the falling body into touching distance. Although the falling bodies of the attacks have often been couched in expressions of absence, expungement and failure, my thesis demonstrates the consistent attempts to re-instate the falling-body image into our understanding of the event, and life in general, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. By the end of the fourth chapter, my exploration of the falling-body image has demonstrated its potential for navigating even the most oblique and indirect references to falling after the attacks.

Following the meshwork is a risky methodology for considering historical events. Forging connections and ties between disparate objects, attending to “flow” as much as specific examples, could potentially suppress difference and context. It may say, in other words, that all falling bodies look the same and so must be connected in some way. My final chapter is the most at risk here since I attempted to push the limits of the meshwork approach by moving beyond the specific parameters of the WTC and the falling bodies of September 2001. But it is precisely this riskiness that reminds us of what is at stake by isolating particular images and narratives as representative or totalising of the event. I understand that I am participating in the framing of the falling-body image with all the examples I include. Furthermore, I hope that through close analysis of the meshwork of intersecting bodies that forges links between the materials in each chapter, I have articulated the friction caused by these intersections of images, producers and consumers, and so provided evidence for my approach. To minimise the sense that “everything is connected” and so anything could be a

part of the meshwork, I have proposed that every falling- or mid-air-body image has the potential to be drawn along lines of relation into the meshwork I have created here, but these lines of relation are not necessarily activated. To trigger the entanglement of an image in the meshwork of falling-body images, it takes a framing narrative that brings them together into a particular narrative of falling, such as the ones I have outlined throughout this thesis.

As a result, the potential impact of my research for 9/11 scholarship is a topology of the event that does not suggest that the world was changed irrevocably by the attacks, that there was a rupture between “before” and “after”, nor does it counter with an understanding of linear continuity between moments of violence as if nothing had changed. Instead, I suggest looking at the event as an entanglement in which new lines or threads became, and continue to become, enmeshed in our growing, moving and living environment. Through my case study of the falling-body image, I have demonstrated how the event itself moves along these paths to encounter new frames with new producers and consumers that are sometimes far beyond the initial context of the attacks. As ever, there is plenty of room for further research along these lines. Although, with my analysis of Junod’s articles, I gestured towards the relationships, and tensions, between authorised, mainstream framings of the falling-body image and unauthorised, “grassroots” framings, I would have liked to have explored in greater detail the presence of the falling-body within, in particular, museum spaces and public memorials. The way these institutions handle (or do not handle) the continuing evolution of the event as it becomes entangled in more unexpected frames would be a valuable thread to the mesh. It would have been intriguing to see what happens to the meshwork in spaces that might attempt to still or provide resolute meaning to the attacks.

In November 2016, *TIME* magazine unveiled its “100 Most Influential Photographs” of all time in the form of a digital project and a companion book, after three years of compiling the list in collaboration with a host of curators, historians, editors and

photographers (Pollack). Drew's photograph of a person falling from the WTC is featured amongst the other ninety-nine images (Figure 5.4). By putting the list together, the team became aware that although the photographs varied widely in terms of subject, context and time period, "one aspect of influence has largely remained constant throughout photography's more than 175 years": "[t]he photographer has to be there" to bring "a single vision to the larger world" (Goldberger et al 15). Drew did just that: on the morning of Tuesday 11 September 2001, he followed a person falling through the viewfinder of his camera, and the photograph has been pulled towards the most disparate, unexpected and fascinating corners of this "larger world". It seems utterly fitting for the end of this thesis to coincide with this most prominent current whereabouts of Drew's photograph, to see what other photographs *TIME* magazine have chosen to surround the photograph and to consider what this might mean for the future of the falling-body image. Tim Ingold writes that life is "not an assemblage but a roundel: not a collage of juxtaposed blobs but a wreath of entwined lines, a whirl of catching up and being caught" (*Life* 7). This thesis has followed and moved with the falling-body image along its wild and unruly lines of life, chased it into unanticipated places and unexpected entanglements and, finally, has been caught in the lines of the meshwork itself.

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Appendix

Introduction: Falling Through the Meshwork



Figure 0.1. Richard Drew's photograph of a person falling from the World Trade Center during the terrorist attacks of September 2001, in "AP Images: Richard Drew", *Associated Press*, Associated Press, n.d. 10 Jan. 2015.



Figure 0.2. N. R. Kleinfield's article in the 12 September 2001 issue of the *New York Times*, from "The Falling Man", by Tom Junod, *Esquire*, Hearst Communications, Sept. 2003. Web. 31 Oct. 2012.



Figure 0.3. Richard Drew's photograph in the *Morning Call*, in *9/11: The Falling Man*, Dir. Henry Singer, Channel 4, 2006.



Figure 0.4. David Surowiecki, “Victims Jump”, from the Picture of the Year International Awards, Omeka, 6 July. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2015.



Figure 0.5. José Jimenéz, “Leap to Death”, from the Picture of the Year International Awards, Omeka, 6 July. 2008. Web. 2 Mar. 2015.



Figure 0.6. Lyle Owerko, “September 11th”, *Lyle Owerko Photography*. Lyle Owerko Photography, n.d. Web. 2 Mar. 2015.



Figure 0.7. Lyle Owerko, “September 11th”, *Lyle Owerko Photography*. Lyle Owerko Photography, n.d. Web. 2 Mar. 2015.



Figure 0.8. Photo illustration based on a photograph by Lyle Owerko, in Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, London and New York: Penguin, 2005, 59.



Figure 0.9. Kleinfield's article, in *9/11: The Falling Man*, Dir. Henry Singer, Channel 4, 2006.

1. Richard Drew and N.R. Kleinfield : Falling and Framing



Figure 1.1. Richard Drew's photograph of the assassination of Robert Kennedy, in Lauren Johnston, "RFK assassination 'like yesterday' for photographer Richard Drew", *Newsday*, Newsday, 3 June 2008. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.



Figure 1.2. Arnold Hardy, "Winecoff Hotel Death", in Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010, 40.



Figure 1.3. Stanley Forman, “Fire on Marlborough Street”, in Barbie Zelizer, *About to Die: How News Images Move the Public*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010, 41.



Figure 1.4. Richard Drew’s photograph of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, in Patrice O’Shaughnessy and Gene Mustain, “Terrorist bomb kills six and injures hundreds at the World Trade Center in 1993”, *New York Daily News*, New York Daily News, 27 Feb. 1993. Web. 15 Sept. 2016.



Figure 1.5. Central park, in Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, London and New York: Penguin, 2005, 60-61.



Figure 1.6. Magnified version of the photo illustration of Owerko's photograph, in Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, London and New York: Penguin, 2005, 62.

2. A Digital Access to Intimacy: The Long Afterlife of the World Trade Center “Jumpers”



Figure 2.1. Jeff Christensen's photograph of people leaning out of the upper windows of the north tower, in "9/11 anniversary in pictures: the attack on the World Trade Center in New York", *Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 2002. Web. 14 Apr. 2014.



Figure 2.2. An enlargement of Christensen's photograph with the person identified as Luke Rambousek by his father, in David Friend, "The Man in the Window", *Vanity Fair*, Condé Nast, 1 Sept. 2006. Web. 14 Apr. 2014.



Figure 2.3. Carolee Schneemann, *Terminal Velocity* (2001), PPOW Gallery, New York.
PPOW Gallery, n.d. Web. 30 Nov. 2012.

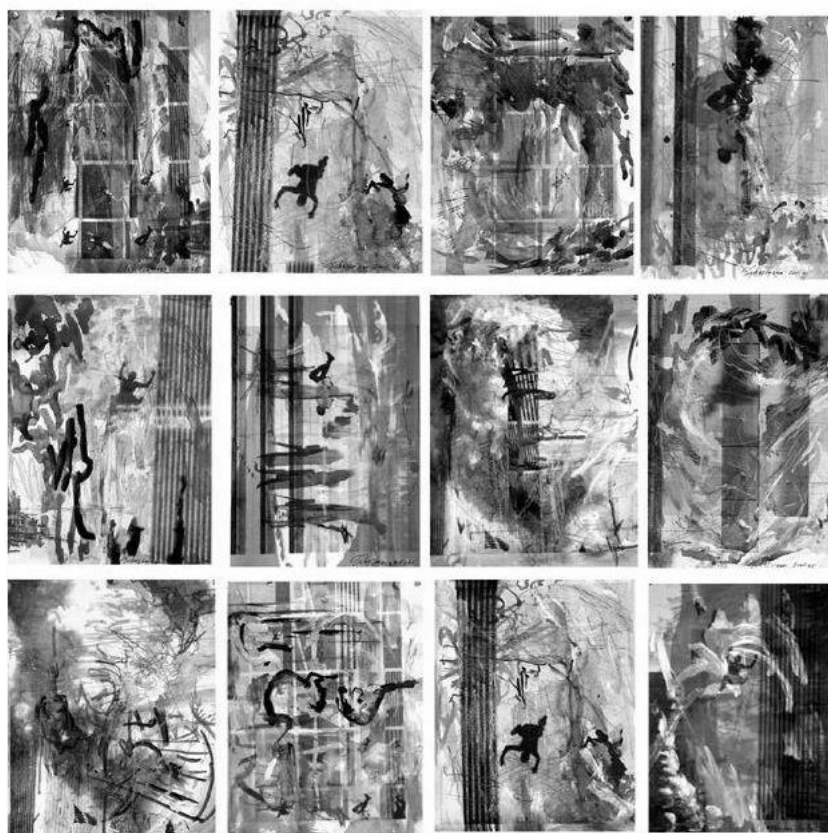


Figure 2.4. Carolee Schneemann, *Dark Pond* (2001-2005), PPOW Gallery, New York.
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Figure 2.5. A comparison of Richard Drew's photograph and an advertisement for *Mad Men*, in Tom Junod, "Falling (Mad) Man", *Esquire*, Hearst Communications, 30 Jan. 2012. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.



Figure 2.6. Michael Ramirez's cartoon from the *New York Post*, in Tom Junod, "The Torturous, Shameless Exploitation of the Falling Man", *Esquire*, Hearst Communications, 18 Dec. 2014. Web. 20 Dec. 2014.



Figure 2.9. Image from user “brianv” on *Clues Forum*, “Re: FALLING MAN”, *Clues Forum*, Clues Forum, 20 Nov. 2010. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.

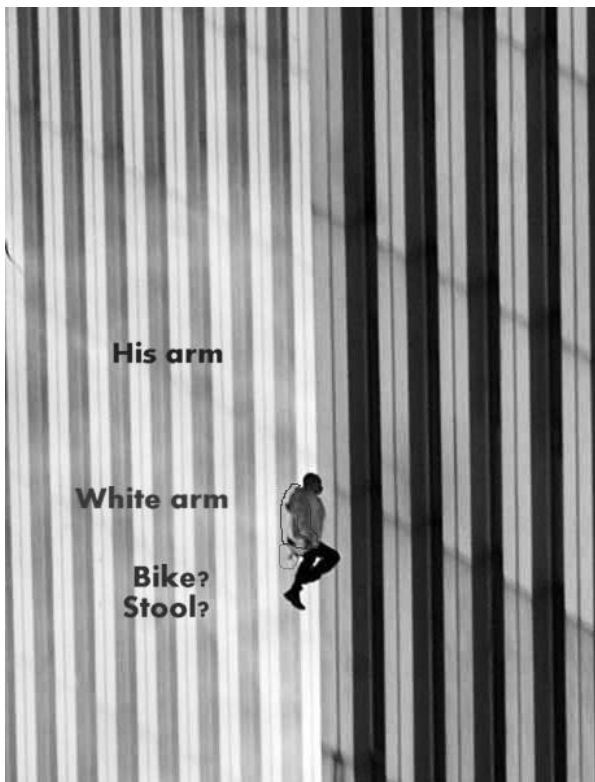


Figure 2.10. Image from user “burlington” on *Clues Forum*, “Re: FALLING MAN”, *Clues Forum*, Clues Forum, 12 May 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.



Figure 2.11. Image from user “burlington” on *Clues Forum*, “Re: FALLING MAN”, *Clues Forum*, Clues Forum, 13 May 2012. Web. 10 Nov. 2015.



Figure 2.12. Robert Green FAIL meme, “9/11 Robert Green FAIL”, *Know Your Meme*, Literally Media, 2010. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.



Figure 2.13. Robert Green FAIL meme, “Chicago Bulls Robert Green FAIL”, *Know Your Meme*, Literally Media, 2010. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.

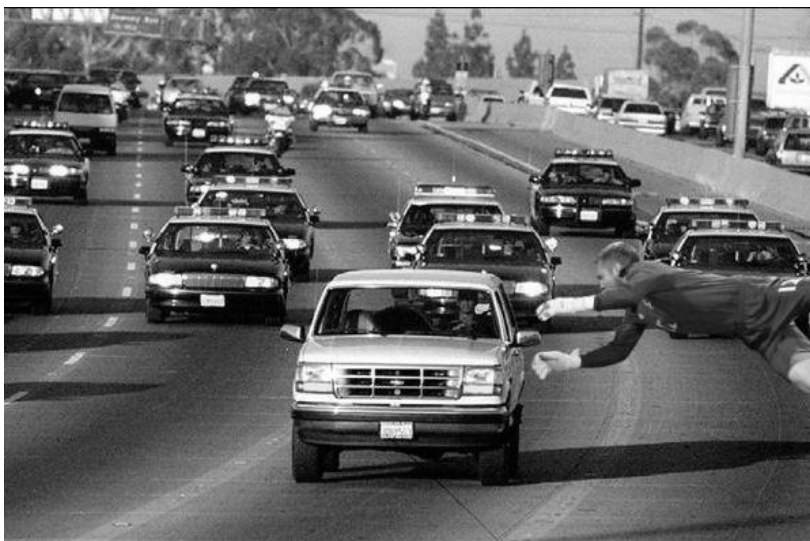


Figure 2.14. Robert Green FAIL meme, “O. J. Simpson Robert Green FAIL”, *Know Your Meme*, Literally Media, 2010. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.

\$20 Bill Prediction

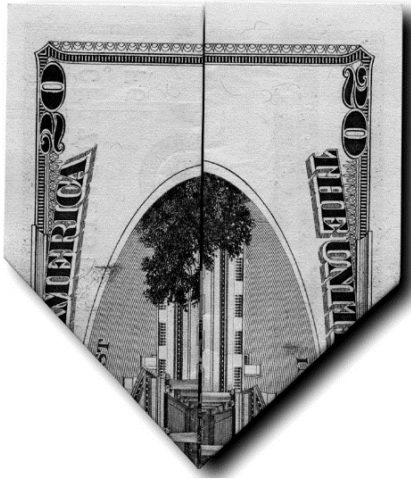


Figure 2.15. “\$20 Bill Prediction”, “9/11 Archive”, *Vanadia*, Vanadia, n.d. Web. 10 May 2016.



Figure 2.16. Colby Buzzell’s photograph of someone falling from the north tower, in “World Trade Center Attack.” *Breakout Magazine*, Breakout Magazine, 10 Oct. 2001. Web. 18 May 2016. Internet Archive.



Figure 2.17. Colby Buzzell's photograph of someone falling from the north tower, in "World Trade Center Attack", *Breakout Magazine*, Breakout Magazine, 10 Oct. 2001. Web. 18 May 2016. Internet Archive.

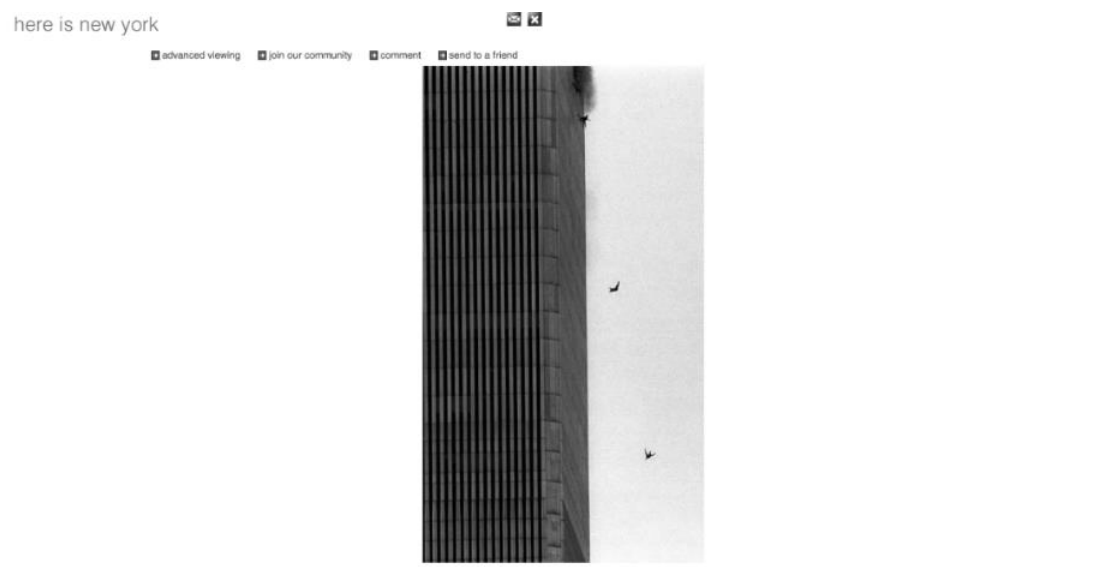


Figure 2.18. David Surowiecki's photograph on the *here is new york* website, "Image 1484", *here is new york*. here is new york, 4 July 2003. Web. 18 May 2016. Internet Archive.

3. **“[C]ompletely raw comes the memory”: Falling and Performing at the World Trade Center**

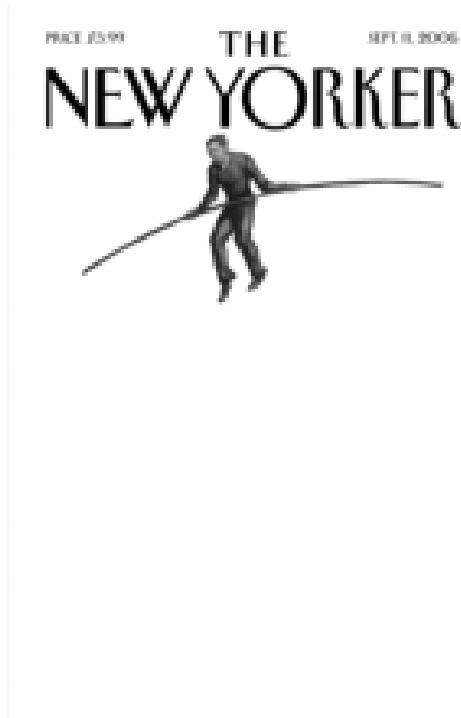


Figure 3.1. *New Yorker* cover 11th September 2006, “9/11 Magazine Covers”, ASME, Association of Magazine Media, 2007 10 Apr. 2016.



Figure 3.2. *New Yorker* cover 11th September 2006, “9/11 Magazine Covers”, ASME, Association of Magazine Media, 2007. 10 Apr. 2016.



Figure 3.3. John Mavroudis' potential *New Yorker* cover design, "Anatomy of a *New Yorker* Cover: A Look Back", *Zen Pop*, Zen Pop, 11 Sept. 2011. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.



Figure 3.4. John Mavroudis' potential *New Yorker* cover design, "Anatomy of a *New Yorker* Cover: A Look Back", *Zen Pop*, Zen Pop, 11 Sept. 2011. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

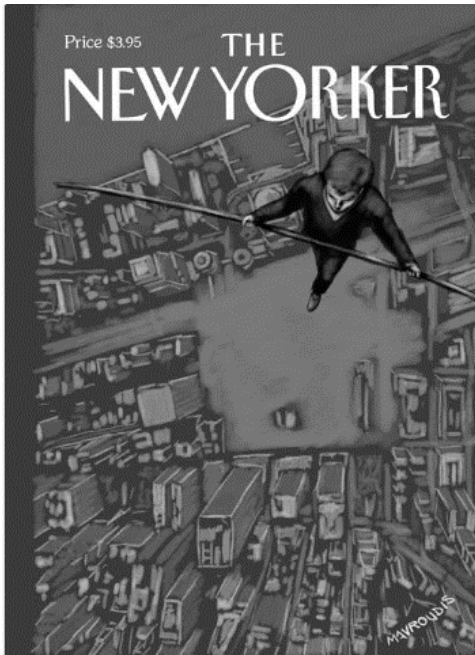


Figure 3.5. John Mavroudis' potential *New Yorker* cover design, "Anatomy of a *New Yorker* Cover: A Look Back", *Zen Pop*, Zen Pop, 11 Sept. 2011. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

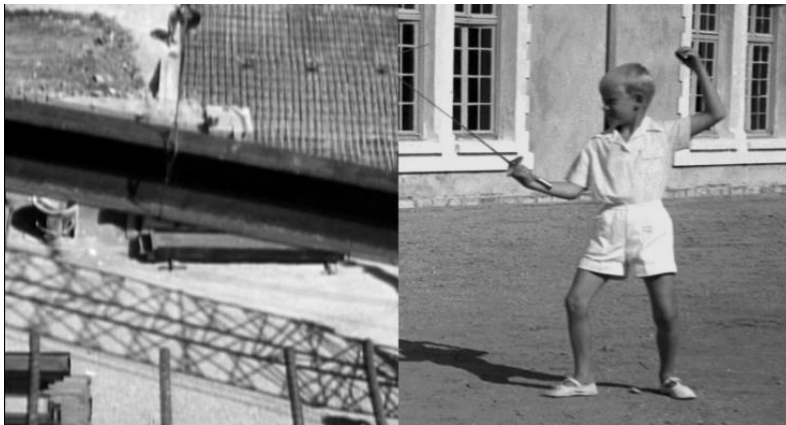


Figure 3.6. Opening sequence of *Man on Wire*, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.



Figure 3.7. Opening sequence of *Man on Wire*, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.



Figure 3.8. Opening sequence of *Man on Wire*, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.



Figure 3.9. Opening sequence of *Man on Wire*, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.



Figure 3.10. Opening sequence of *Man on Wire*, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.



Figure 3.11. Peering into the void, in *Man on Wire*, Dir. James Marsh, Icon Productions, 2008. DVD.

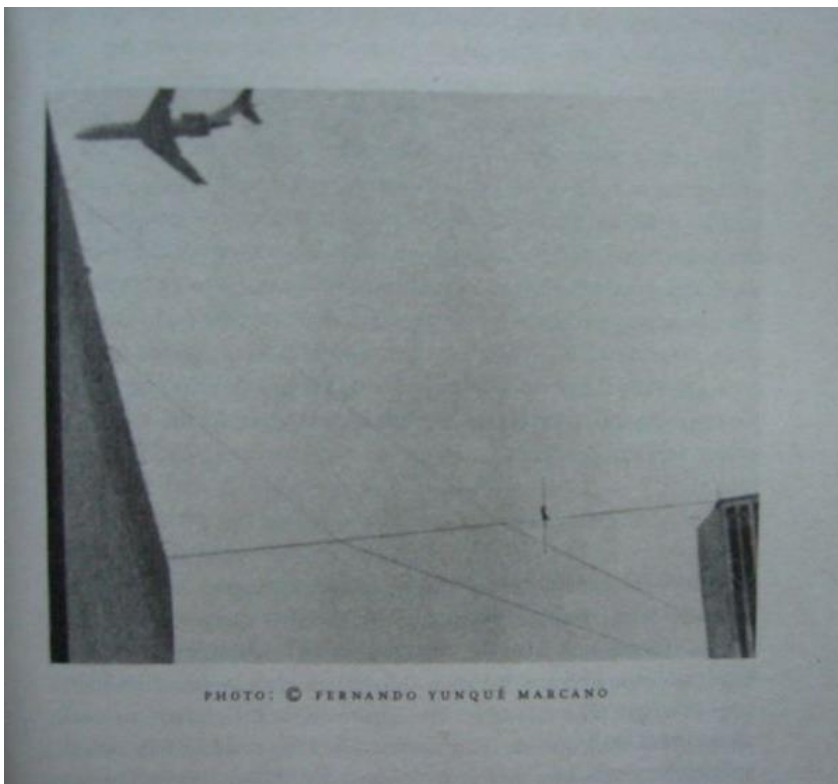


Figure 3.12. Vic Deluca's photograph of Philippe Petit attributed to Fernando Yunque Marciano in *Let the Great World Spin*, London: Bloomsbury, 2009, 237.



Figure 3.13. Owen Quinn about to jump from the north tower, in Owen Quinn, “My_WTC #138”, *My_WTC*, *My_WTC*, 20 Mar. 2011. Web. 10 Mar. 2014.



Figure 3.14. James Brady in Damon Winter’s photograph, in Randy Kennedy, “Ironworkers of the Sky”, *New York Times*, *New York Times*, 8 Sept. 2011. Web. 8 Mar. 2016.



Figure 3.15. James Brady in Damon Winter’s photograph, in Randy Kennedy, “Ironworkers of the Sky”, *New York Times*, *New York Times*, 8 Sept. 2011. Web. 8 Mar. 2016.



Figure 3.16. James Brady (left) and Billy Geoghan (right) connect beam signed by President Obama, in Grace Wyler, “Here’s the Message Obama Signed on One World Trade Center”, *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 6 Aug. 2012. Web. 8 Mar. 2016.

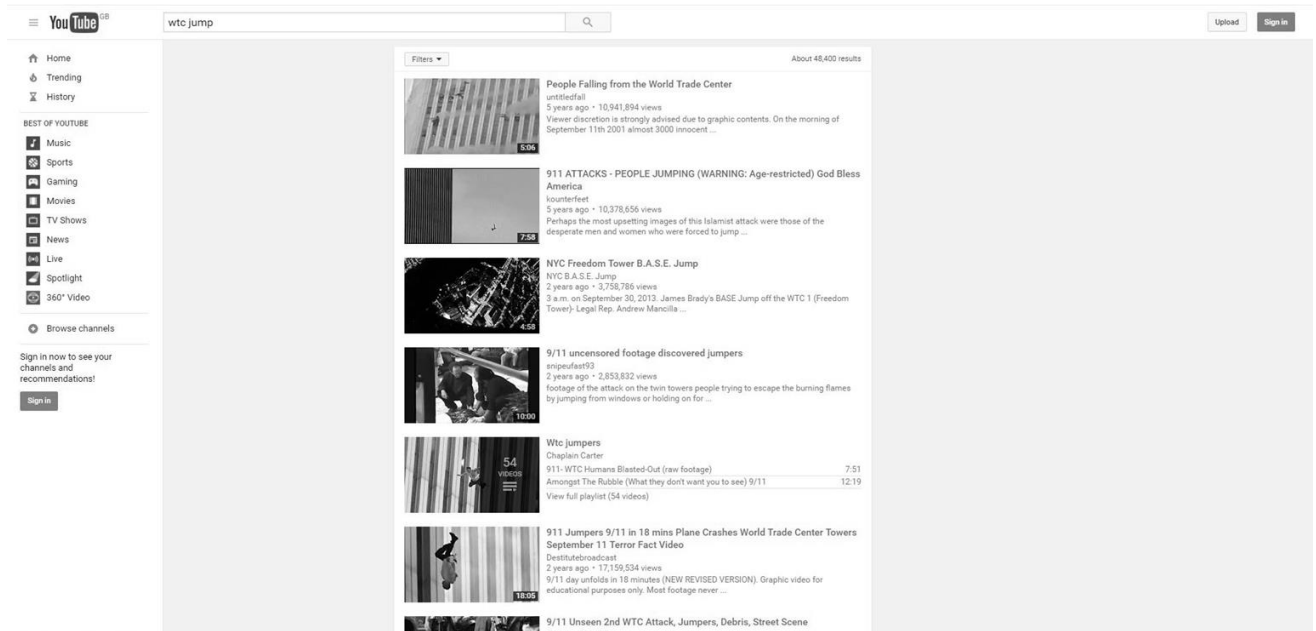


Figure 3.17. Entanglement of Brady’s jump with the falling bodies of the 2001 terrorist attacks, *YouTube*, YouTube, 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

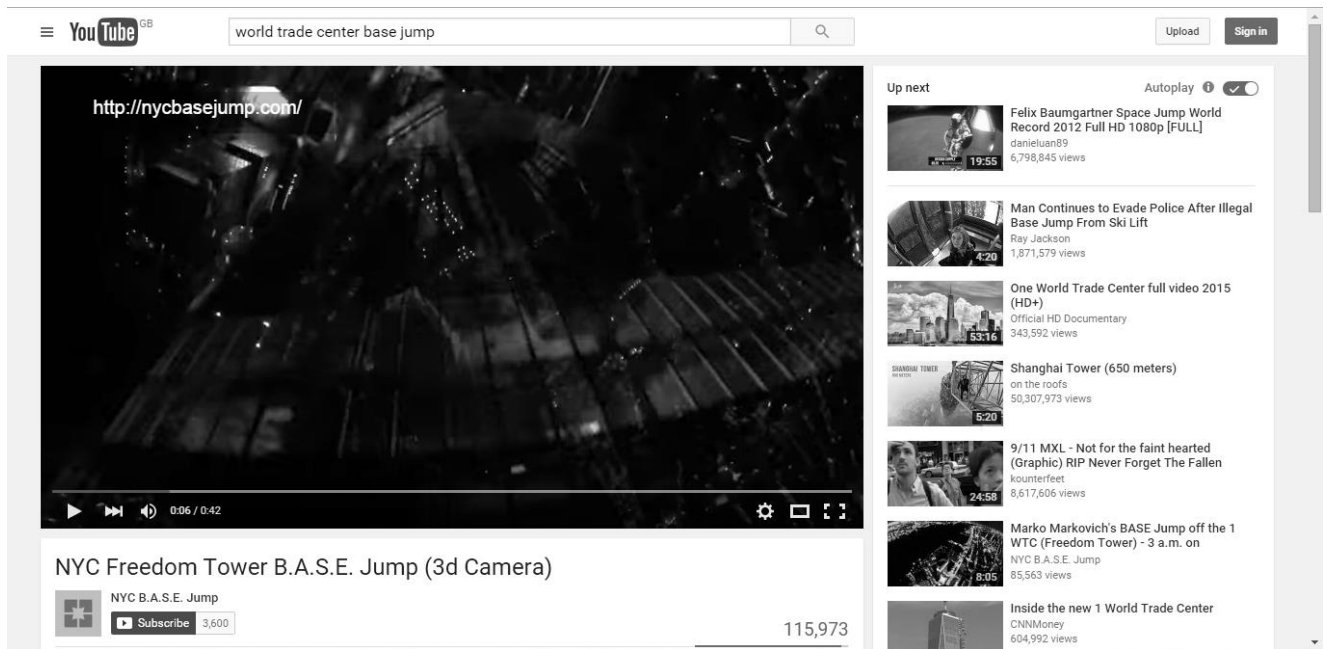


Figure 3.18. Entanglement of Rossig's jump with the falling bodies of the 2001 terrorist attacks and Felix Baumgartner's space jump, *YouTube*, YouTube, 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

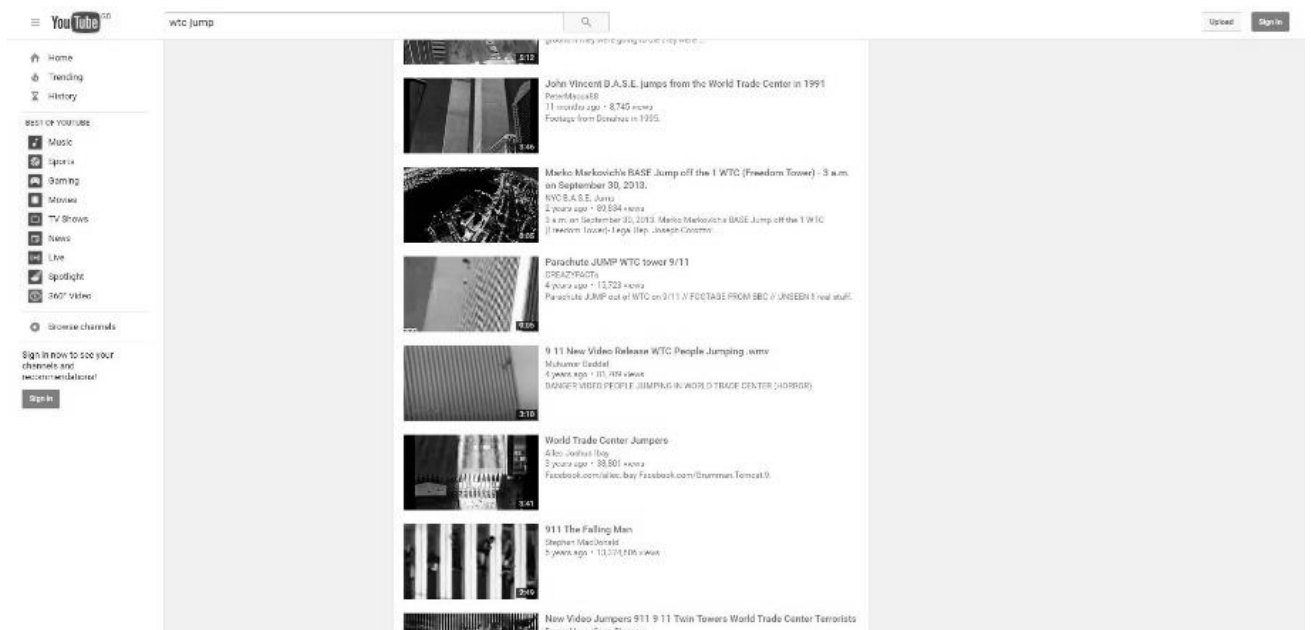


Figure 3.19. Entanglement of Markovich's jump with the falling bodies of the 2001 terrorist attacks and also John Vincent's 1991 WTC BASE jump, *YouTube*, YouTube, 20 Apr. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2015.

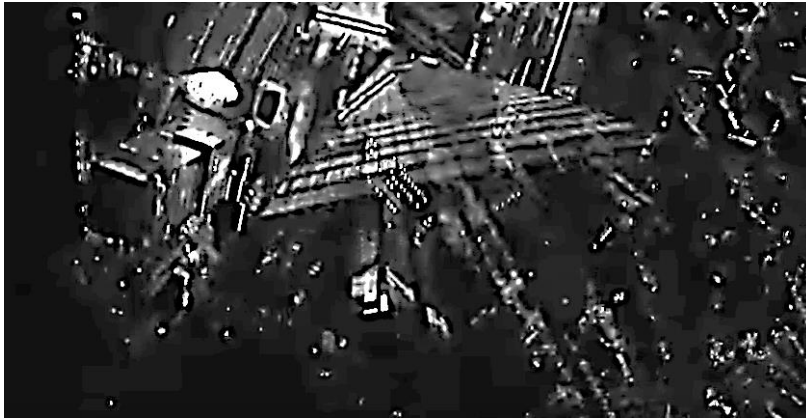


Figure 3.20. Andrew Rossig's GoPro footage, *YouTube*, YouTube, 25 Mar. 2014. Web. 30 Mar. 2014.

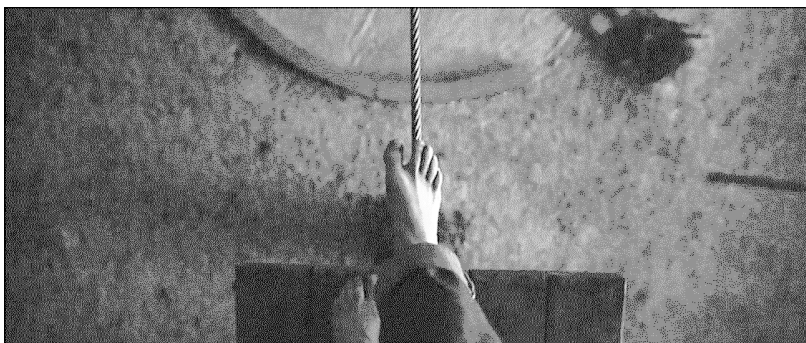


Figure 3.21. Petit almost walks in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.22. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.23. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.24. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.

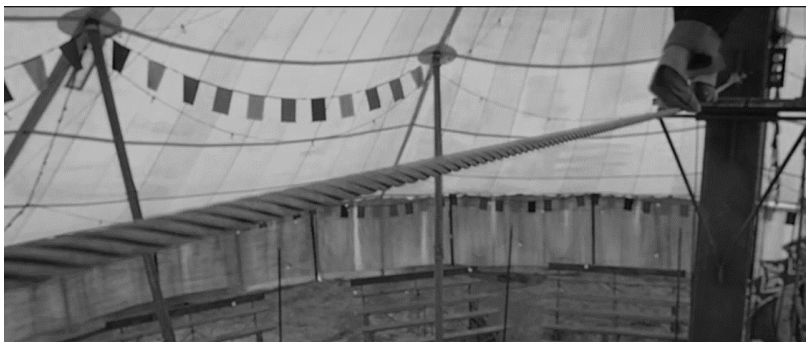


Figure 3.25. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.26. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.27. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.28. Petit almost falls in the circus, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.29. The void, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.30. The falling wire, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.

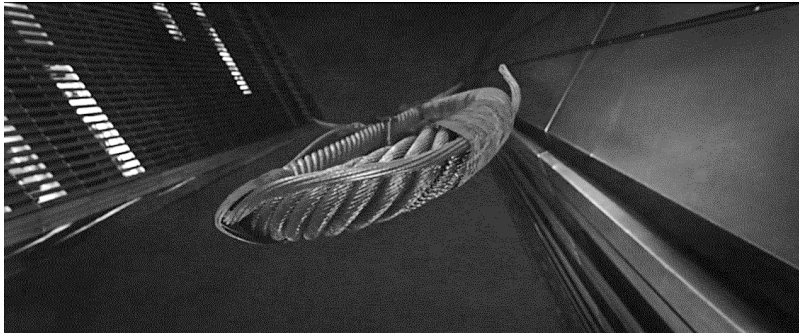


Figure 3.31. The falling wire, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.

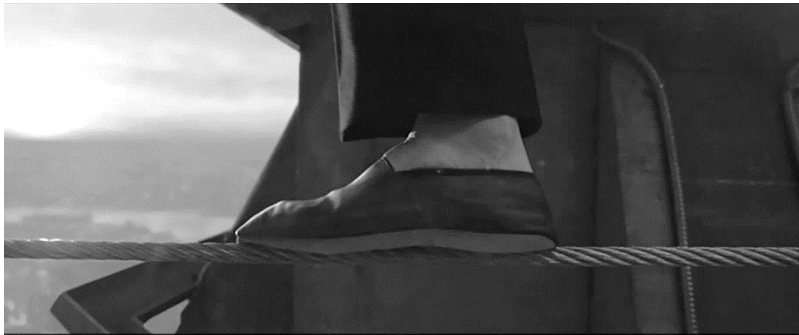


Figure 3.32. The final sequence, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.33. The final sequence, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.34. The final sequence, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.

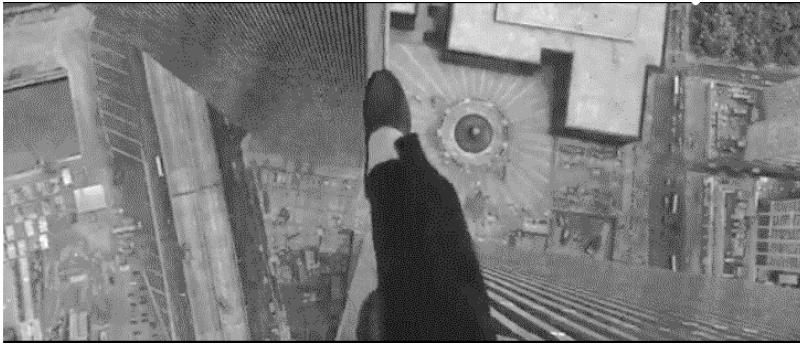


Figure 3.35. The final sequence, in *The Walk*, Dir. Robert Zemeckis. Columbia Pictures, 2015. DVD.



Figure 3.36. Andrew Rossig's GoPro footage, *YouTube*, YouTube, 25 Mar. 2014. Web. 30 Mar. 2014.

4. Falling in Love with Falling: Joy and the Falling Body



Figure 4.1. Luke Jerram's performance piece "Falling Man", *Luke Jerram*, Luke Jerram, 23 Feb. 2012. Web. 15 May 2016.



Figure 4.2. Opening sequence of *Birdman*, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.3. Opening sequence of *Birdman*, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.4. Opening sequence of *Birdman*, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.5. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.6. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.7. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.8 Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.9. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.10. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.11. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.12. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.

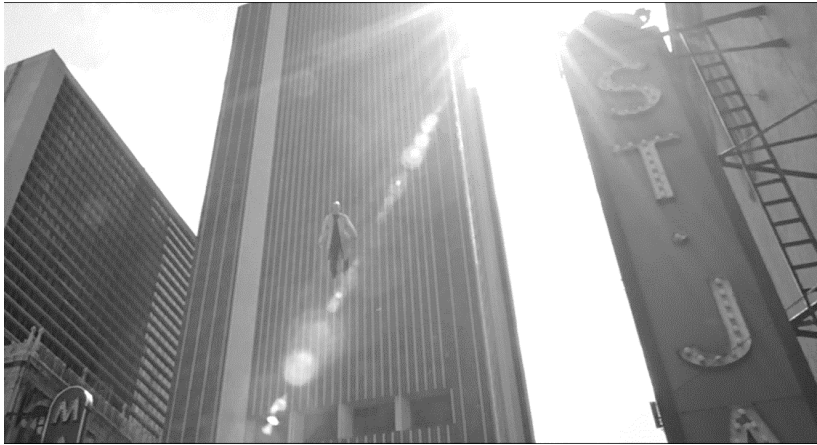


Figure 4.13. Riggan flying sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.14. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.

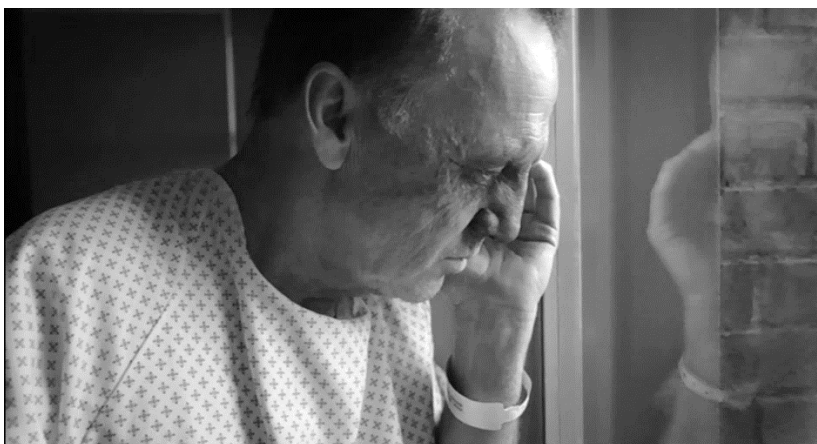


Figure 4.15. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.

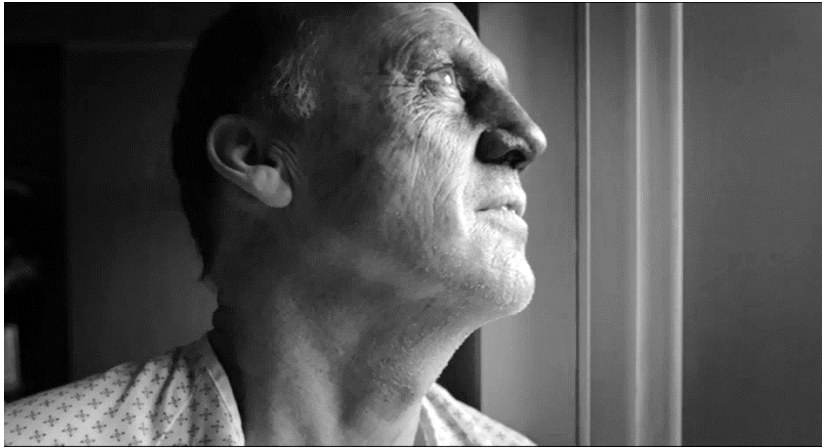


Figure 4.16. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.

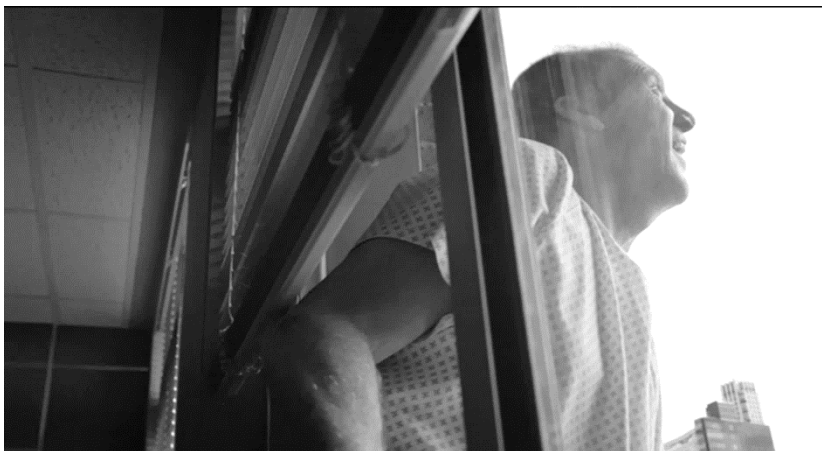


Figure 4.17. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.18. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.



Figure 4.19. *Birdman* final sequence, *Birdman*, Dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2014. DVD.

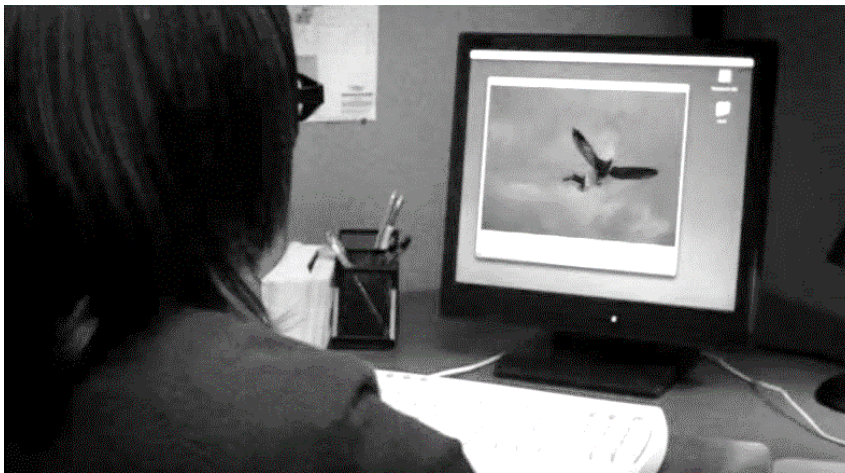


Figure 4.20. Sleater-Kinney “Jumpers” music video, *YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 July 2016.



Figure 4.21. Sleater-Kinney “Jumpers” music video, *YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 July 2016.



Figure 4.22. Sleater-Kinney “Jumpers” music video, *YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 July 2016.



Figure 4.23. Sleater-Kinney “Jumpers” music video, *YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 July 2016.

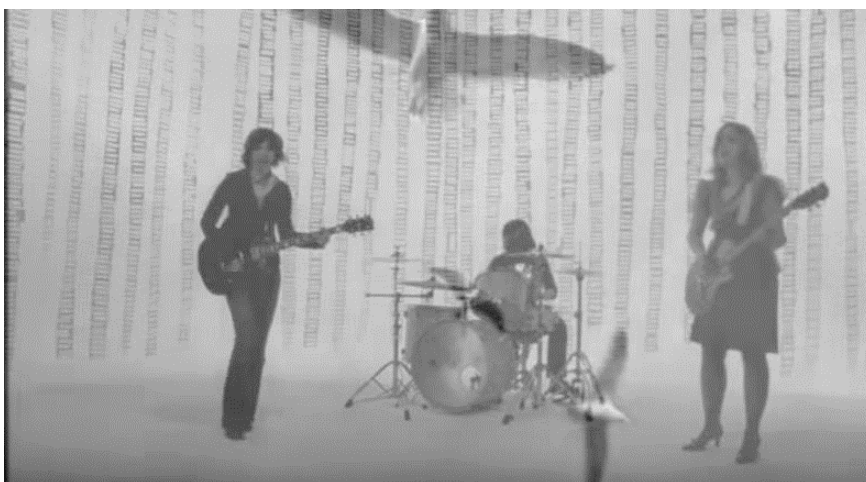


Figure 4.24. Sleater-Kinney “Jumpers” music video, *Sub Pop YouTube*, YouTube, 7 Apr. 2006. Web. 10 July 2016.



Figure 4.25. The Golden Gate Bridge in the background, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.



Figure 4.26. The Golden Gate Bridge in the background, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.



Figure 4.27. The Golden Gate Bridge in the background, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.



Figure 4.28. The Golden Gate Bridge, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.



Figure 4.29. Opening shot, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.

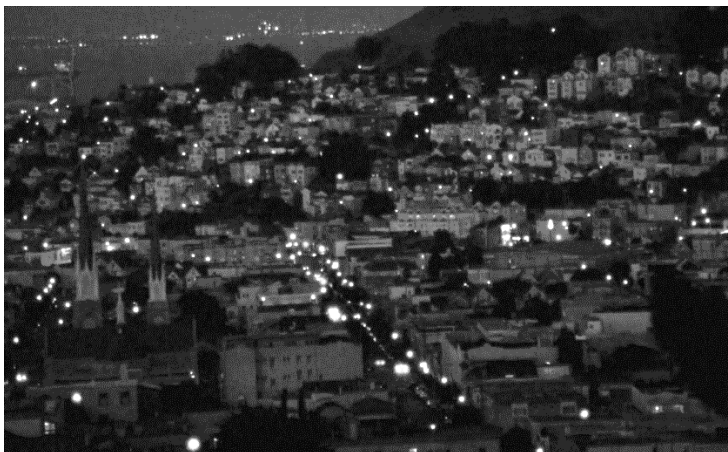


Figure 4.30. Closing shot, in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.



Figure 4.31. Opening shot of the bridge, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.32. Closing shot of the bridge, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.33. "The joy of life", in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.

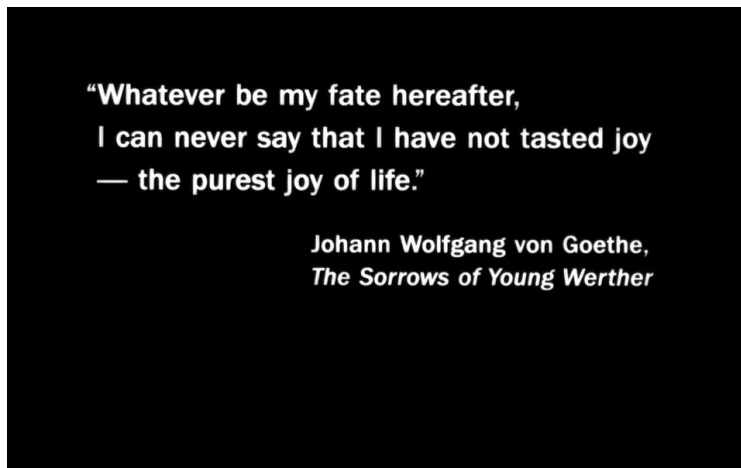


Figure 4.34. "The joy of life", in *The Joy of Life*, Dir. Jenni Olson. Frameline, 2005. Vimeo.

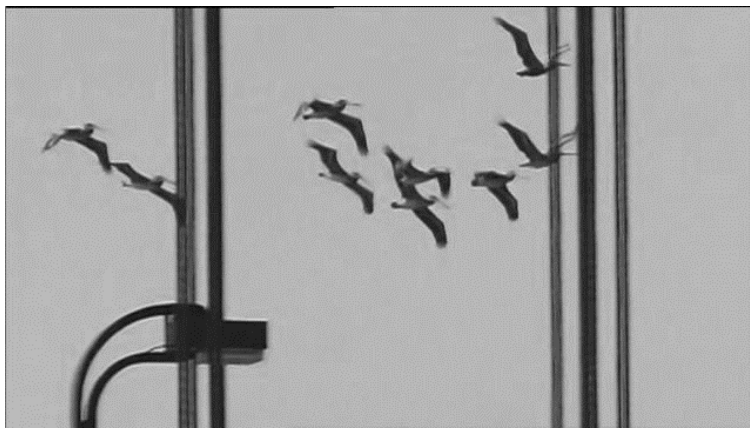


Figure 4.35. Opening sequence of *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.36. Opening sequence of *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.37. Opening sequence of *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.38. Opening sequence of *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.39. Gene Sprague, in *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.40. The man on the phone, in *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.

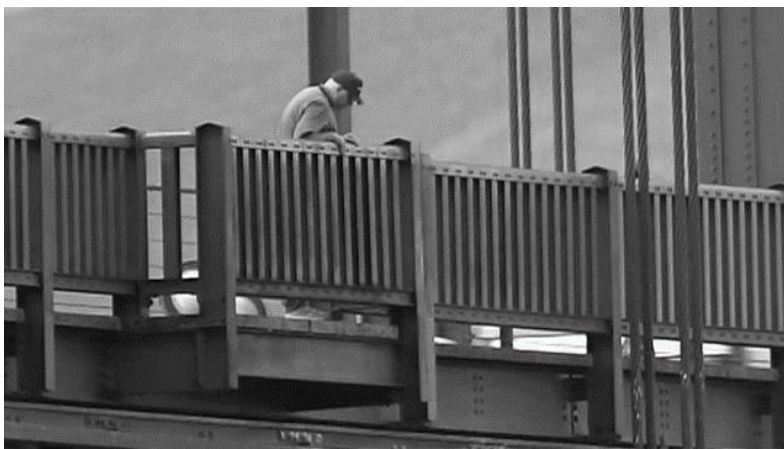


Figure 4.41. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.

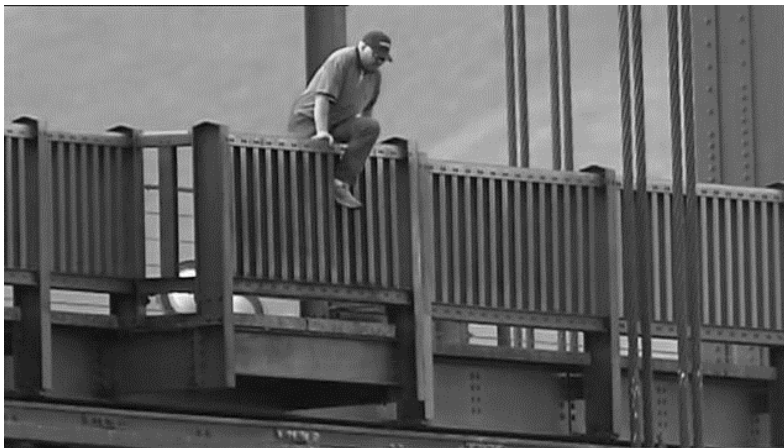


Figure 4.42. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.43. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.44. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.45. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.46. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.47. The man in green, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.48. Kite surfers after the suicide, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.49. Kite surfers after the suicide, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.50. Kite surfers after the suicide, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.51. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.52. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.53. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.

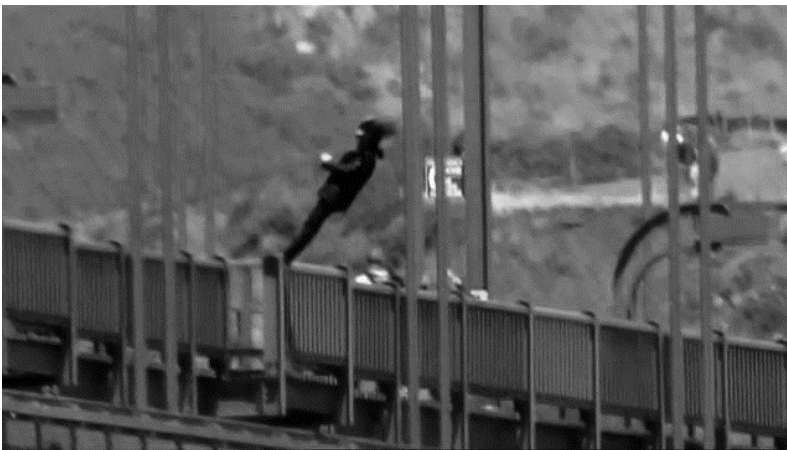


Figure 4.54. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.55. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.

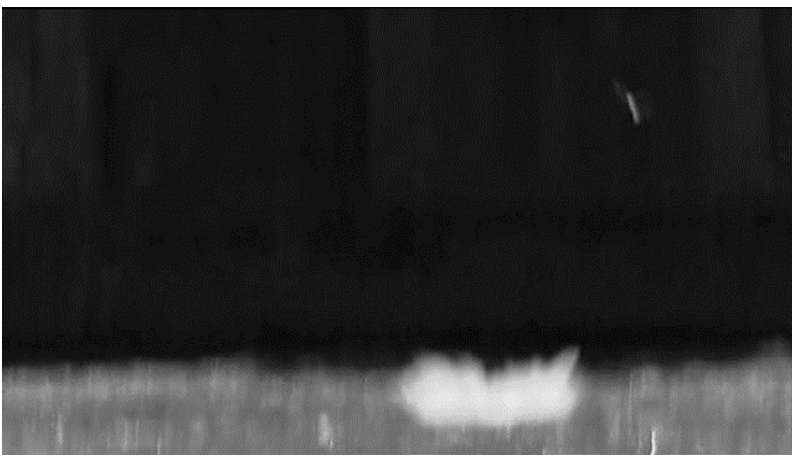


Figure 4.56. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.



Figure 4.57. Gene's jump sequence, *The Bridge*, Dir. Eric Steel, IFC Films, 2006. DVD.

Conclusion: “[A] whirl of catching up and being caught”

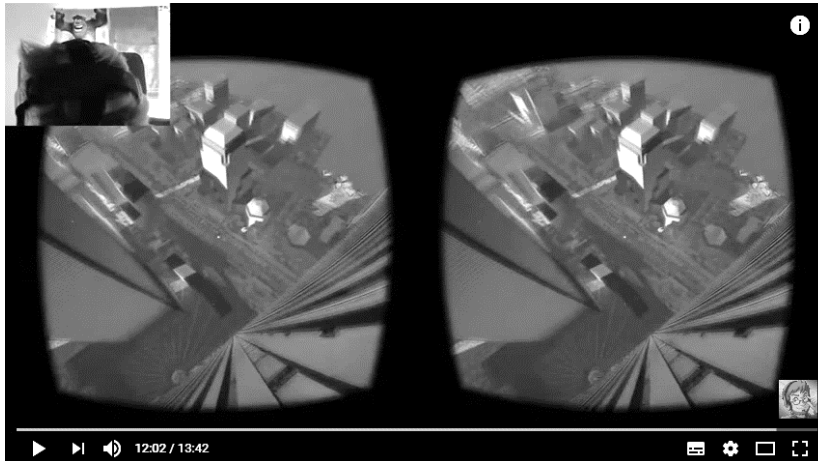


Figure 5.1. Walkthrough of [08:46], LanokirX, “9/11 Simulator – Oculus Rift – 08:46”, *YouTube*, YouTube, 15 Oct. 2015. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

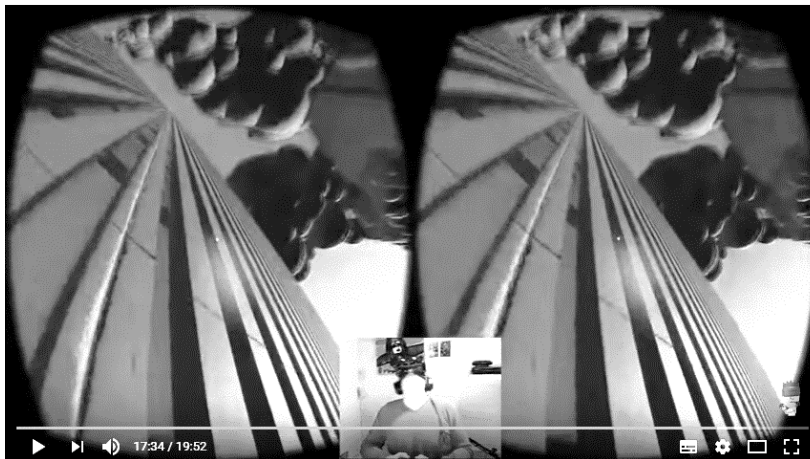


Figure 5.2. Walkthrough of [08:46], Classicgamerrnl, “Playing [08:46] Twin Tower 9-11 simulator, just to see what the fuss is about, *YouTube*, YouTube, 4 Nov. 2015. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.



Figure 5.3. Walkthrough of [08:46], The Gamer, “9/11 Virtual Reality Experience [Unreal Engine 4] Demo + Download”, *YouTube*, YouTube, 12 Sept. 2015. Web. 1 Aug. 2016.

